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JOHNNY MARR
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THE SMITHS!
THREE CLASSIC MARR RIFFS TO LEARN

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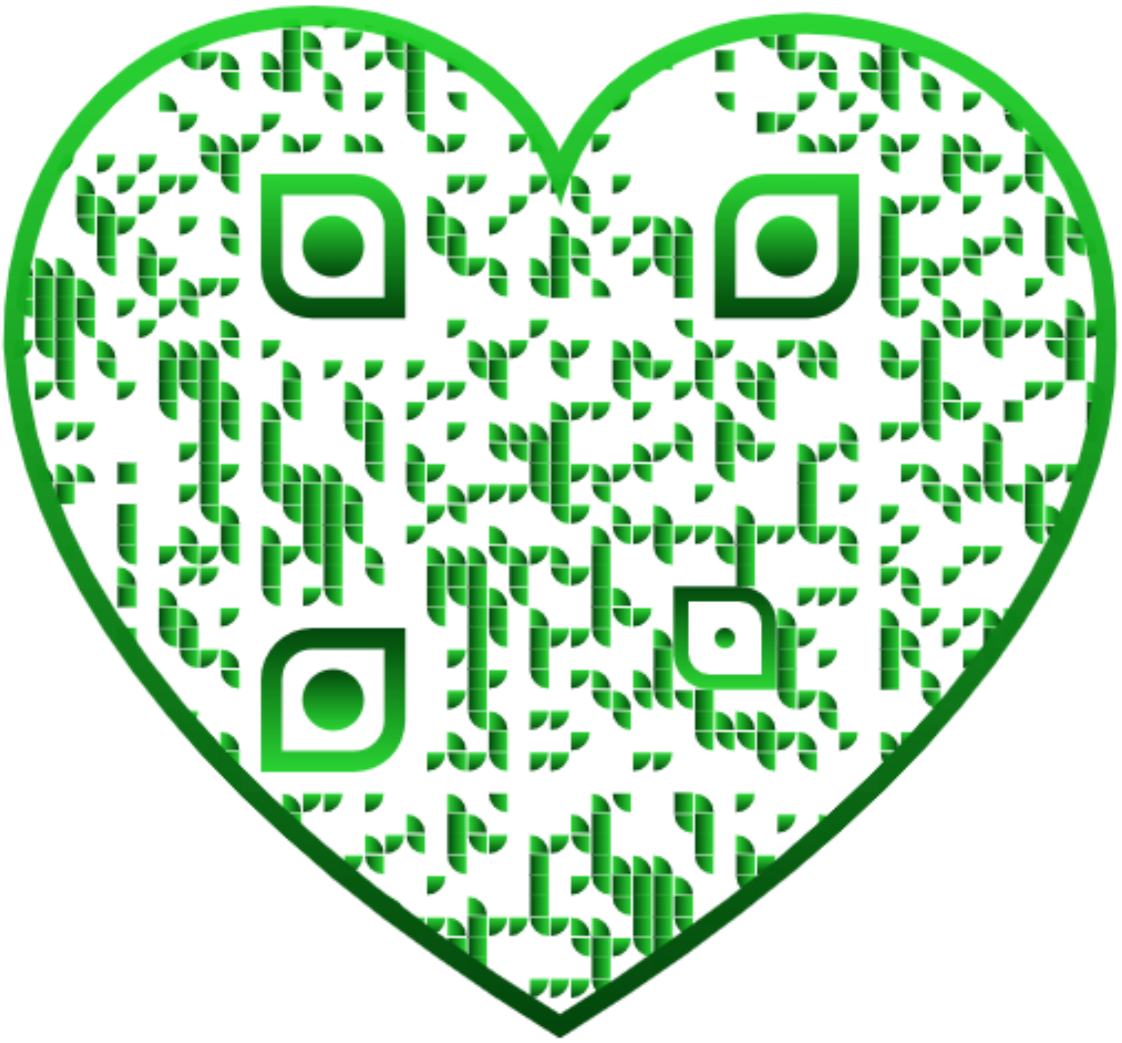
BOSS SY-200 SYNTH PEDAL
LEAD TONES GOOD ENOUGH TO DITCH THE KEYBOARD!



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Welcome...

This month, I'm proud to bring you our fantastic exclusive interview with the legendary Johnny Marr, who discusses his career from The Smiths to his latest solo album, *Fever Dreams Pts 1-4*. What's most remarkable to me about Johnny's legacy to date is that he's created a lasting influence without resting on his laurels. Sure, he's best known for his work with The Smiths in the 80s, but remember, this was an act that lasted barely five years. Johnny went on to form Electronic with Joy Division/New Order's Bernard Sumner, and he saw great success with The The, Modest Mouse and The Cribs, before 'going solo' in 2013 – over 25 years after leaving the band that first made his name.

He hasn't stuck rigidly with one signature guitar either. During his time with The Smiths he made notable use of Rickenbacker six- and 12-strings, Fender Teles and Strats, Gibson Les Pauls and ES-335s, and more. These days he's most often seen with his signature Fender Jaguar, but, as he reveals in our interview, he takes a substantial arsenal of gear into the studio.

Also featured for you in our 20-page Marr special is a lesson on Johnny's playing style, three classic Smiths riffs to learn, plus we have exclusive interviews with the Red Hot Chili Peppers' John Frusciante, Manic Street Preachers' James Dean Bradfield and The Killers' Dave Keuning, who tell us how Marr inspired them.

Enjoy the mag and I'll see you next month!

Chris Bird Editor

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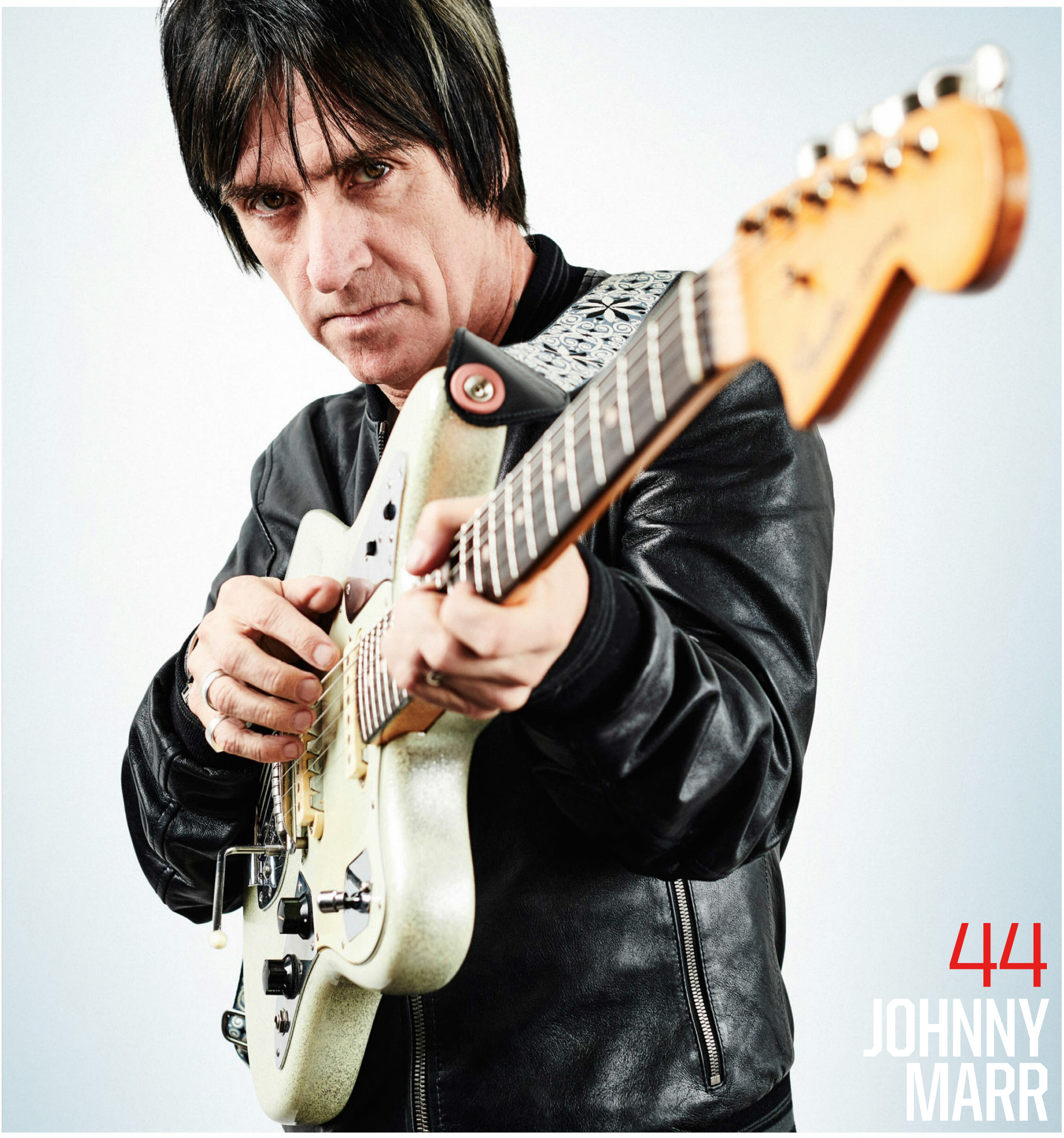
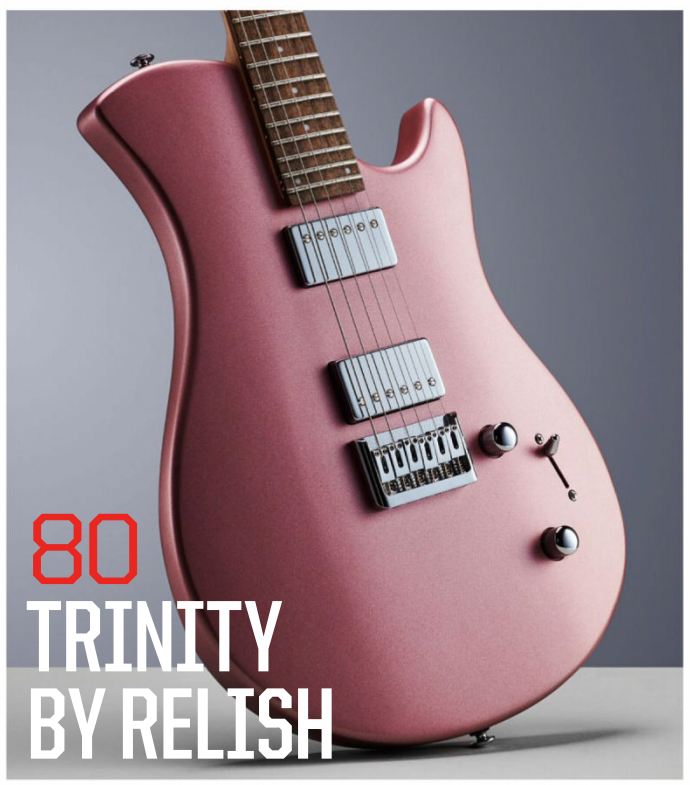


44 JOHNNY MARR

Cover image Joby Sessions/Future PLC



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Type this link into a web browser on any computer, smartphone or tablet and you'll be directed to TG's website at guitarworld.com. Here you'll find all the audio and video for the issue, available to download or stream.

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Words Stan Bull **Photo** Josh Goleman

PURE MAGIC

This month sees indie folk act Big Thief return with their fifth studio album *Dragon New Warm Mountain I Believe In You*. Following on from the twin releases of *U.F.O.F.* and *Two Hands* in 2019 before solo albums from three of the group's members, *Dragon* finds the band at their most experimental and ambitious to date – a sprawling double album covering a variety of styles, yet sounding distinctly like the Brooklyn four-piece.

At 20 tracks though without a single instrumental, the guitar playing of *Dragon* always serves the song first and foremost, creating a bed of texture to propel the melody rather than to distract from it with unnecessary six-string self-indulgence. But guitarists Adrianne Lenker and Buck Meek nevertheless conjure up numerous ways to colour the world of each song with rich, harmonious playing.

Opening with the delicate acoustic strums of *Change*, Lenker and Meek move through delicate folk picking, twangy country leads, alt-rock scuzz and broken-chord slowcore riffing across the album's near-two-dozen tracks. Highlights include the playful barnyard stomp of *Spud Infinity*, the nostalgic 80s rock of *Little Things*, the feedback-heavy screeching of *Love Love Love* and the dreamy fingerpicking on the short but sweet *Heavy Bend*.

Best of all is *Simulation Swarm*'s guitar solo, which displays open-string pedal tones and fretted pull-offs – Lenker's fingerstyle riff built upon a flurry of notes seemingly plucked at random. Whilst others may have considered it too jarring to feature on such a mellow track, the fascinating lead line only strengthens the song's weighty emotional tone. However, the part is then repeated in the outro, implying that this seemingly random burst of notes is actually

a meticulously well-written passage, but one that is given room to breathe with opportunities for subtle improvisation.

Dragon was produced by drummer James Krivchenia and recorded with four different engineers in four studios over five months. To capture the rootsy, natural feel of its sound, Big Thief recorded themselves playing live in the studio together, feeding off of each other's performances in real-time. The final version of *Change* heard on the album is a practice run that was recorded by an engineer unbeknownst to the band.

As Lenker says: "One of the things that bonds us together as a band is pure magic. I think we all have the same guide and none of us have ever spoken what it is because we couldn't name it, but somehow, we are all going for the same thing and when we hit it… we all know it's it, but none of us to this day, or maybe ever, will be able to articulate in words what the 'it' is. Something about it is magic to me."

SCENE

YOUR NEWS IN GUITARS

INTERVIEW

"IT'S BRUTAL – AND DISGUSTING!"

THE "WORLD OF TONES" IN **ONCE HUMAN**'S METALLIC ATTACK

Once Human have established themselves as one of the most distinctive metal bands of modern times. Guitarist and founding member Logan Mader reveals the gear used for the LA-based quintet's latest album, *Scar Weaver*, and looks back his recent reunion tour with his former band, Machine Head.

What can people expect from Scar Weaver?
We didn't rewrite the script – it sounds like Once Human and it sounds like an evolution of our last album – which was called *Evolution*! Notably, it's a bit heavier. When it goes heavy, it's even more brutal and more disgusting than ever. On the other hand, it's quite melodic and even beautiful at times.

Was this heaviness influenced by you reuniting with Machine Head for the 25th anniversary tour of the band's classic 1994 album *Burn My Eyes*?
That's one of the reasons it took so long for us to get this new record out – it's been five years since our last album. The Machine Head tour was amazing for me, like a big celebration, and a super fortunate thing to be able to go back and relive something that was so epic when it happened. But it also took time away from Once Human. So when I came home from the tour, Max Karon, our other guitarist, had written ten songs for this new album and they were done and they were amazing.

What guitars did you use on Scar Weaver?
Ibanez RG Multi-Scales and the tuning is GCGCFAD – or GCGCFCG for Max because, for lead, he has an even weirder tuning than me. I love Ibanez and I have a bunch of custom builds by them that are baritone – they did those for me for the Machine Head stuff. Those are phenomenal guitars.

What are your other gear essentials?
I have a Kemper and Axe-FX III, and we have a world of tones within these little boxes. They have the benefit of always being consistent. Every night, it sounds the same, there's no variables. We go with amp models that we've created, either Max or myself. They originate from a real amp with tubes and microphones and a whole chain of events in the signal.

Which tracks are you most excited to play live?
I think *Eidolon* is going to go over well live, and the song Scar Weaver. We played *Deadlock* – the one featuring Robb Flynn [of Machine Head] – live in San Francisco with Robb as a guest. That was the first time we'd played it and that one feels great. It's different for us – it's got this slow, almost nu metal bouncy groove and that translates really well.

Ellie Rogers

AMP

CAT POWER

Line 6 has announced its new Catalyst amps – a trio of combos featuring HX-level modelling and more. With 60-watt (£342) and 100-watt (£465) 1x12" versions, and a 200-watt (£603), 2x12", each amp features 6 line 6 HX Original amp models ranging from clean to high gain. Also on board are 18 effects, and dedicated reverb section offering a further six models. There's connectivity, too, with an effects loop, XLR line out, power amp input for using the amp as a powered speaker, and a four-channel USB audio interface which also allows for deeper editing via the free Catalyst Edit app for your computer or iOS/Android device.

TOOLKIT

IT'S SO EASY

When it comes to setting up your guitar, sometimes it's not enough to go 'by-eye' alone. MusicNomad has developed its Keep It Simple, Setup (KISS) concept in order to make adjusting the most important settings on your guitar easy and accessible. Priced at £58.50, its six-piece Setup Gauge Set includes everything you need to check the nut height, neck relief and string action on your guitar, with a handy set of gauges preset to common and standard heights. Also included are two radius gauges, MN's innovative Pick Capo, a 24-page guide on how to use it all, and a handy case to keep it all together.

GUITAR

ROOTS MANOEUVRE

Fender's taking its popular Paramount series back to its roots, with the addition of three Americana-styled acoustics. Priced at £649, there's a PO-220E Orchestra, PD-220E Dreadnought and PS-220E Parlor, all available in Three-Colour Sunburst, Natural or Aged Cognac Burst with a choice of solid spruce or solid mahogany tops, with solid mahogany back and sides. All three are fitted with a brand new Fender/Fishman-designed Sonitone pickup and preamp system, which includes an under-saddle piezo, as well as a body-mounted sensor.

Other appointments include bone nut and saddle, slim taper mahogany necks and hardshell cases.

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Words Stuart Willaims **Photography** Olly Curtis

NEXT LEVEL BOSS!

The chairman of the pedalboard is back with one of the best-stocked multi-FX units in its price range

As you're probably aware, multi-FX pedals have had a big resurgence in the last couple of years, and Boss' latest do-it-all box sees the Japanese effects giant come out swinging.

The GX-100 features 23 amp models swiped from the flagship GT-1000, all of which make use of the brand's AIRD technology (that's Augmented Impulse Response Dynamics, acronym fans!). There's over 150 effects on-board too, but with 15 assignable 'blocks' per-patch, and some impressive connectivity – including an effects loop for integrating standalone pedals and even an amp channel switching socket – plus plenty of control via eight assignable footswitches and an expression pedal, the GX-100 is making a strong case as the centrepiece of your rig.

The whole lot is edited by a decent sized touch display and intuitive controls, plus you can hook it up to Boss' Tone Studio software for deeper tweaking from your computer. Or, with the optional Bluetooth audio/MIDI adaptor, you can make those tweaks from your phone or tablet. Talking of computers, of course it has a USB audio interface built in, allowing you to record, re-amp and monitor your computer recordings via the GX-100.

UP CLOSE

AIRD Modelling

There are 23 of Boss' AIRD amp models inside – that's the same modelling found on the flagship GT-1000.

Connectivity & Control

There's a lot going on here, with an external effects loop for hooking up your favourite hardware pedals, switching your amp's channel, and plenty of assignable footswitch controls.

Digital functionality

As well as a fully functioning USB audio interface, the GX-100 can connect to the Boss Tone Studio for deep edits, and there's a Bluetooth audio/MIDI adaptor (sold separately) for streaming audio.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN
- ✔ Drop D tuning
- ✔ Octave effect
- ✔ Half-whole diminished scale

RIFF OF THE MONTH

NOVA TWINS

Antagonist

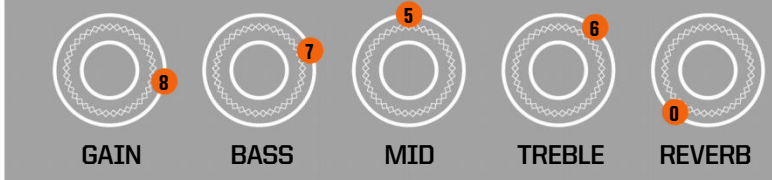
Nova Twins' mix of grime-y urban punk and bass-heavy groove has garnered guitarist Amy Love and bassist Georgia South praise from the likes of Tom Morello, who personally invited them to open for Prophets Of Rage. The pair also recently helped Fender launch their new Player Plus range of guitars. And, with new album *Supernova* due in June, our expectations are high, fuelled by lead single and this month's riff, *Antagonist*. Played in drop D tuning, the hefty guitar riff is delivered in unison with the bass, with help from an octave pedal (one octave down, naturally) to stand up to the weight of the song's gargantuan bottom end. With the octave effect thickening the guitar tone, there's no need for powerchords – this is a one-string riff played at the 1st, 3rd, 4th and 6th frets. Just remember to keep the idle strings muted. Note that the section is in an 'A A A B' arrangement; so the first phrase is played three times, before finishing with a variation.

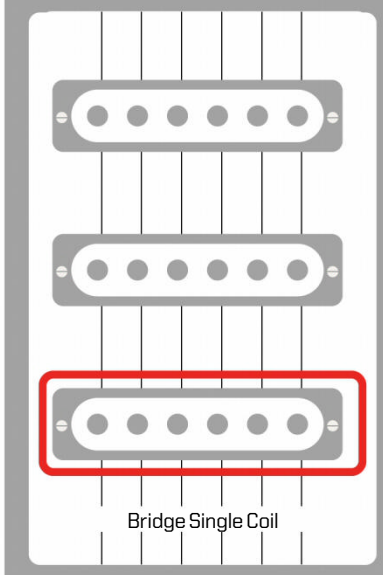
CHEAT SHEET...

Appears at: 0:48-1:04
Tempo: 120bpm
Key/scale: D half-whole diminished
Main techniques: Downpicking, string muting

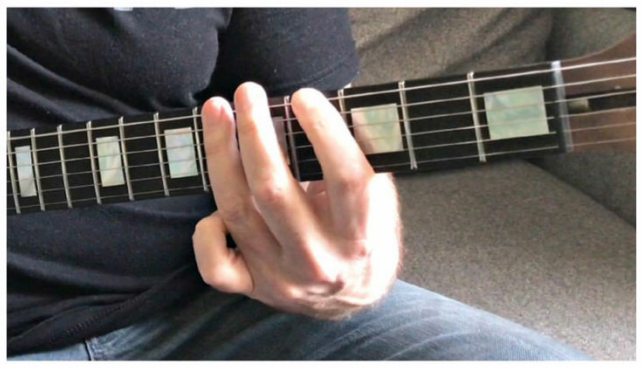
GET THE TONE

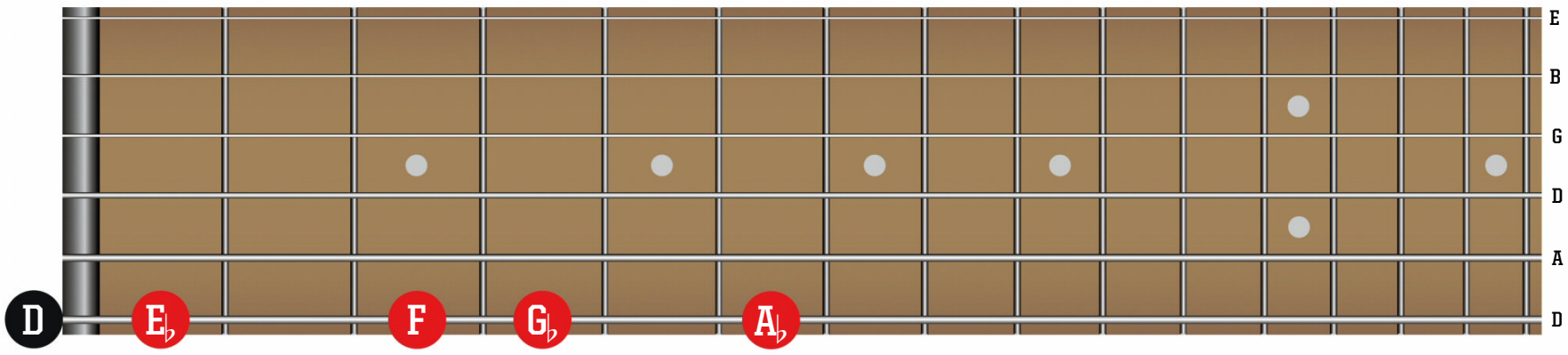
CHANNEL OVERDRIVE





Amy recorded most of the forthcoming album with her P90-equipped Fender Mustang into a Fender Hot Rod amp. She's notoriously tight-lipped about her pedalboard, but our bat-like ears detect an octave pedal set to an octave down and with the mix at roughly 30 per cent. A high gain fuzz style distortion should get you a ballpark tone. Remember, P90s are single coil pickups with typically sparkling top end. They tend to have a bit more bass than many single coils though, so bear that in mind when setting your amp's EQ.





This riff centres around the D root note and uses a symmetrical pattern of intervals: semitone, tone, semitone, tone (or D, E♭, F, G♭, A♭ if you're talking about the notes). You can theoretically continue this pattern until you reach the root note again at the 12th fret and create the 'half-whole' diminished scale. Remember, you'll need to downtune your sixth string from E to D (aka drop D tuning) to play the track.

Photo Getty

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IT'S IN MY BLOOD

CHRIS BRODERICK

PRO SIGNATURE SOLOIST™

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FIRST STEPS IN GUITAR...

CHORDS & NOTES

As a top rock journalist for over three decades, TG content editor Paul Elliott knows everything about guitar, except how to play! We've decided to fix that...

There's a huge amount to learn in your first lesson before you even start playing any music: how to hold the guitar and your pick; string names and numbers; fret numbers; and where to put your fingers. This is all completely new to TG's content editor, Paul Elliott, who this month takes his very first guitar lessons with ace TG tutor, Jenna Scaramanga. For the next few months you can watch Paul's progress. And, if you're a new player yourself, why not follow our lessons and improve your own playing?

TEACHER

JENNA SCARAMANGA
Jenna has taught guitar for 15 years at music colleges, schools, and IGF summer camps. She studied with Guthrie Govan at BIMM, and was classic rock columnist for TG's sister magazine *Guitar Techniques*.

STUDENT

PAUL ELLIOTT
Paul has written about music since 1985 for various titles including *Sounds*, *Kerrang!*, *Q*, *MOJO* and *Classic Rock*. Among the many guitarists he has interviewed are Slash, Angus Young, Keith Richards and Jimmy Page.

JENNA SAYS...

In a first lesson, I want students to have a go at both chords and single-note lines. Paul and I started with an AC/DC-style open G5 powerchord. It's more common to start with major chords, but the songs Paul wants to learn contain that G5. I think focusing on students' passions is a great way to keep them motivated.

Next, we looked at fretting one note cleanly with good tone. A big part of learning guitar is learning how to troubleshoot your own playing – how do you fix it if it sounds bad? If you pluck the string and it doesn't sound right, usually you're either not pressing hard enough, not close enough to the fret, or some other part of your hand is fouling the string.

For single-note playing, we covered the E minor pentatonic scale. Lots of classic riffs can be adapted to work in this shape. As well as developing your ability to pick accurately and synchronise your hands, the scale introduces common rock, blues, and metal sounds.

TECHNIQUE CHECK...

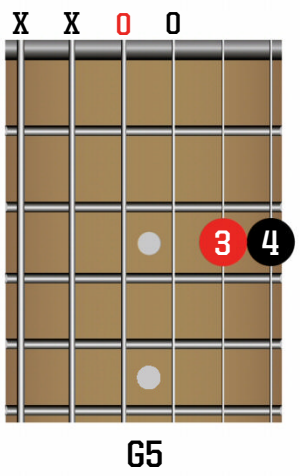
Get your fingers in the right place and your powerchords will rock!

1 FRETTING HAND POSITION

Paul was naturally inclined to keep his palm tight to the neck, but this makes it hard to fret. Keep a gap between palm and neck to give your fingers room to move.

2 FRETTING ONE NOTE

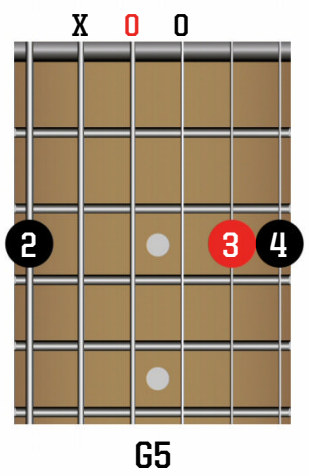
Next up, fretting. The idea is to press firmly on the string, close to the fretwire but not on top of it. Good fret-hand position makes reaching across to the bass string easier.



G5

PARTIAL G5 CHORD

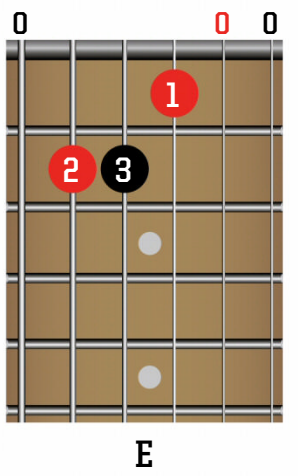
Strumming just the four thinnest strings, this chord helps you get used to fretting two strings at once. Here, the dots tell you where to fret and the numbers tell you which of your four fingers to use.



G5

FULL G5 CHORD

The challenge with this big G5 chord is keeping all the strings ringing clearly while stretching to the bass string and muting out the fifth string (marked X in our chord box).



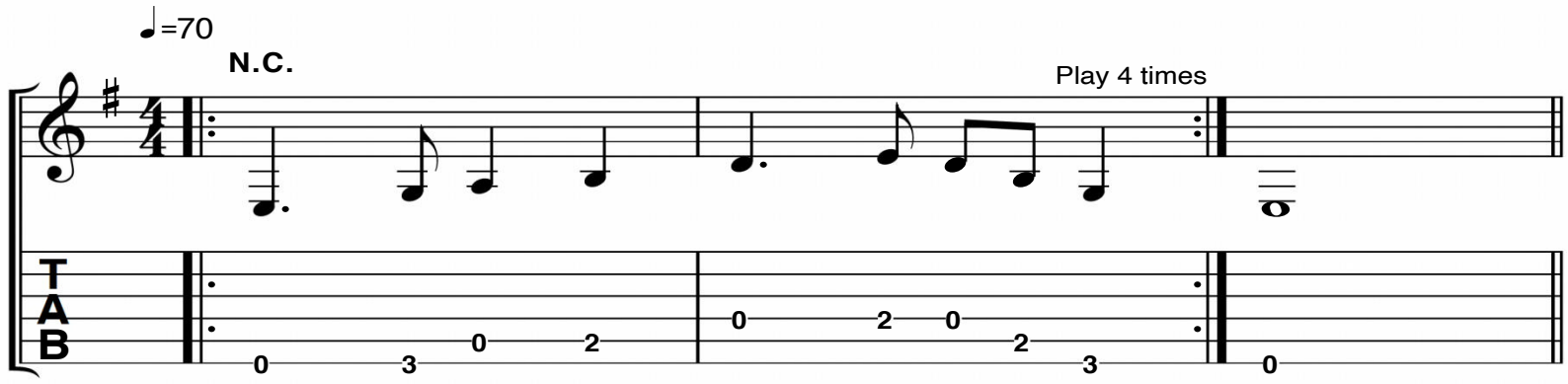
E

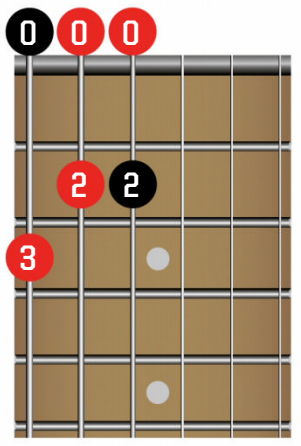
E MAJOR CHORD

Paul and Jenna also looked at this E major chord. Changing smoothly between chords is a key skill, so Paul will be practising his G5 to E major change over the coming month.

E MINOR PENTATONIC RIFF

BIT.LY/TG356AUDIO





E minor pentatonic

Jenna wrote this riff for Paul to practise, and showed him the basics of reading guitar tab: lines represent guitar strings, and numbers are the frets where you place your fingers. Take it slow and aim for no fret buzz if you're playing along. *Thousands* of riffs are based on the E minor pentatonic scale, which we've shown here.

PAUL SAYS...

The biggest challenge for me in this first lesson was the placement of my hands and fingers to achieve the best possible reach and flexibility. It is clearly very important to get this aspect right from the start. Two things were particularly encouraging. Firstly, even a small amount of practice builds understanding and confidence. Secondly, reading tab is simple enough to make sense even to a beginner with no previous experience of reading music. There is a degree of embarrassment to overcome as Jenna watches me fumbling for the right strings and frets, but after a few attempts at two classic rock riffs – Black Sabbath's *Iron Man* and Free's *Wishing Well* – I am now the third best guitarist in my family, behind my wife and my ten year-old son, who is taking lessons and has already mastered the riff to *Smoke On The Water*.

Words Amit Sharma **Photos** Jack Moran

"WE BUY EACH OTHER PEDALS FOR BIRTHDAY PRESENTS!"

The Lazy Eyes are Australia's next great psych-rock band. Guitarists Harvey Geraghty and Itay Shachar reveal the secrets of their mind-bending sound...

Young Sydney four-piece The Lazy Eyes could very easily end up becoming your favourite new psychedelic rock band. There's a striking maturity to their self-produced and self-recorded debut album Songbook, which bears the mark of musicians with wisdom far beyond their years.

Drawing influence from the Australian indie/psych movement around them, with Tame Impala and King Gizzard And The Lizard Wizard leading the charge, there's also a jam band mentality to The Lazy Eyes' songs that harks back to The Beatles and the avant-garde 'krautrock' movement. The music they make is hypnotic, with singer/guitarist Harvey Geraghty and fellow guitarists Itay Shachar kicking in some truly phenomenal modulations to spice up their hallucinatory tones...

There's a song on your new album called *Tangerine* – could that be a reference to late 60s art-rockers Tangerine Dream, or perhaps loosely inspired by Beatles lyrics?

Harvey: Our bass player Leon [Karagic] is a big fan of krautrock. And yeah, he's into loads of stuff like Tangerine Dream. These days we all tend to listen to a mix of older and newer artists, though you get to a point where you realise all modern acts are somehow influenced by The Beatles. All of Tame Impala's guitars and drums are Rickenbackers and Hofners. That's pretty much the Beatles set-up! Maybe that helped them resonate with people, because those sounds were already somewhere in their own subconscious.

Itay: I feel like we started this band as nerdy fanboys of the modern Australian scene – that's what shaped our sound. We wore our influences on our sleeves a lot earlier on, playing Gizzard covers in school together, but then we started delving deeper into the older music that inspired them. If someone says they're not a massive Beatles nerd, then they're lying! Everybody loves The Beatles.

So what's the secret to capturing such authentic vintage tones with modern production tools?

Harvey: I don't actually know. There's a lot of people who ask us what gear we use, thinking it's old tape machines. We don't... we just record into Ableton. We don't really try to make our music sound old. Maybe it's the fact that we don't know how to make it sound super good and modern? It's a bit rough around the edges, with maybe more of an amateur production. You listen to mixes of modern songs and every layer sounds like it's on steroids. Every guitar sounds like 'the guitar of the universe', every snare sounds like it's been crafted from hours and hours of tweaking, which isn't necessarily a good thing for music.

Itay: I guess it's that sense of bringing it back to the basics and not overproducing or making things sound too pristine or polished. It sounds crazy, but to make something sound good, it almost helps to make it sound a little less good!

Using vintage-style gear must help too. Tell us about your main guitars and amps...

Harvey: Oh yeah, I forgot to mention our vintage guitars! Though I guess you could make them sound modern if you wanted to! I rock

a Danelectro DC-59 reissue. It's a new model. I think they found a bunch of old lipstick pickups in the old Danelectro warehouse, so they ended up making them exactly how they were back then. I've got a white one of those and a ton of pedals going through a Vox AC15.

Itay: I use a Goya Rangemaster from the 60s. I got it as a birthday present when I was 16. I remember we wanted to go for something that would last, something I could stick with for a while. It looked so cool and unique, I knew it was the one. When we record, we try to use amps more like an instrument. We don't tend to have one default one we plug into. A lot of the electric guitars on the album were recorded direct – we'd only use amps to get a certain overdrive. If we just want the tone from our guitars and pedalboard, it's better to go straight into the interface.

Tracks like *The Seaside* and *Tangerine* are coloured by moments of extreme modulation. What exactly are we hearing?

Harvey: We wanted to use phasers on tracks like *The Seaside* to portray the sea, like an audio effect that gives the impression of waves coming out of the ocean. Mine is a Pearl one – as in the drum company. It was made back in the 80s when every music brand decided to start making guitar pedals. I got it because I felt it could cover every kind of phaser sound I wanted. It has a lot of control on top of the usual 'depth' and 'rate' – you can also widen the phase and choose what frequency the waves are. I can literally control the tide with my pedal!

Itay: Honestly, our phasers are the most prized things in the rig! We both went on a big phaser hunt. That Pearl one is surprisingly versatile! Mine is the Maestro MP-1, it's the big massive one you have to stomp your entire foot onto.

The guitars on *Hippo* and *Nobody Taught Me* are quite effected too...

Itay: Yeah! Hippo is a weird one because both me and Harvey were using strong effects for both rhythm and lead parts. The lead is a chorus sound on a Korg multi-effects unit that we created. There's an expression pedal that I use to ride the speed. And it's the same tone I'm using on *Nobody Taught Me*, just without overdrive.

Harvey: I was using my ZVEX Instant Lo-Fi Junky, with the depth knob turned the whole way. You can turn the knob and it goes from really clean to something more like an old, scratchy vinyl.

Did you use any drive pedals or was that achieved only using amps?

Itay: I think I used a DOD drive pedal. Funnily enough, Harvey gave me that as a gift. We buy each other pedals as presents for birthdays. It's our excuse, getting more pedals for 'the band' so we can use them ourselves!

Harvey: It's true! I was using a drive with a cocked wah for the solo on *Where's My Brain*, and I feel terrible saying this, but it was one of those JOYO pedals which cost $20. They sound great, though! My neighbour gave me that pedal for free.

And were there any delay or reverb pedals involved?

Harvey: I've got this Mr Black Supermoon reverb, which on top of my Instant Lo-Fi Junky, has even more warble on it. You can get pretty seasick with the Supermoon, though I did actually use it on *Hippo*. My delay is actually my first ever guitar pedal, the Giga Delay by Boss. You can do so much with that thing!

Itay: I have a reverb on my board that also does a lot of the swells. There's the trail and then it really blooms. You can hear it on *Intro*, it's called the Météore and made by Caroline. I don't actually use any delay, though there is this stutter effect that I use in a glitchy way – you could kinda say it's a delay of sorts, but not in the classic sense.

SWANNING ABOUT
Back seats from left: Harvey Geraghty, Leon Karagic. Front seats: Noah Lawrence Martin, Itay Shachar

Speaking of *Intro*, that definitely feels like the big guitar hero moment on the record.

Itay: Thanks for noticing! I'm not into overly indulgent guitar playing. I don't really have any guitar heroes, to be honest. That song just came through the melody and slowly we all realised it would be a guitar solo. That happened three times on the album, because there are instrumentals. That tone came from the Korg multi-effects unit and it's another preset I made up completely randomly.

Harvey: We just like to have a lot of fun with our guitars, that's our approach. But we're never using guitars just for the sake of it. We made most of the album in layers, not really as a band. The instrumentals were done as a band, but for the rest we started with the drums and then just started layering on top. A lot of the solos were originally melodies that started from more of a vocal kind of place. They're not very guitar-centric, in that sense. The guitar's just a really good platform and colourful way for us to express ideas.

"WE'RE NEVER USING GUITARS JUST FOR THE SAKE OF IT" HARVEY GERAGHTY

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Interview Jenna Scaramanga Portraits Spencer Chamberlin

"LET'S GO AS HARD AND FAST AS WE CAN!"

Hardcore cult heroes **Turnstile** are poised to be one of the breakout bands of 2022. Guitarist Pat McCrory discusses their "emotional" return to playing live – and how to experiment without losing your edge...

It's February 2022, and Turnstile are thrilled to be back in the UK. When Baltimore's hardcore heroes last played London in two years ago, they didn't know when – or if – they'd be back. As guitarist Pat McCrory recalls, "The world was shutting down. We had to play a London show and then fly home instead of the rest of the tour. We all caught Covid on the way home, and we're like, 'This might be the last show in London that we play.'" To everyone's relief, Turnstile have come back harder than ever, and Pat is buzzing. "We just played the Roundhouse and Nottingham Rock City, and the shows have just been purely magic."

The quintet – Pat McCrory plus vocalist Brendan Yates, lead guitarist Brady Ebert, bassist 'Freaky' Franz Lyons and drummer Daniel Fang – are known for leaving everything on the stage, and the return to gigging was a rude shock to their bodies: "Most of us are pretty active, playing sports or skateboarding or lifting weights," Pat says. "Everybody's got energy to burn so we were like, 'Yeah, we'll be good!' First show, my neck was so twerked out of place I couldn't look up for two days. We came back and we felt like we were 20 years older. We planned a bunch of one-off shows to knock the rust off. The first one we did was in Baltimore. We were all super rusty and everybody's super emotional. We sucked so bad but it was awesome! We worked with those little shows and between ourselves we're like, 'Yo, get those neck stretches in! Stretch your hamstrings! Let's go!'"

The first one-off show was a hometown gig in Baltimore, where Turnstile's egalitarian ethic made for a hell of an atmosphere. As Pat explains: "It's like become this very familial feeling when we play. I feel like I know everybody. The person who makes coffee down the street from my house is at the show. I'm like, 'I see you every day! This is so sick for us to share this exciting experience!' When we play this outdoor show it's free, so anybody from the neighborhood can go to the show. It felt like a communal gathering rather than like, 'Hey, come watch us play!'"

Limber once more, Turnstile's UK return has been helped by the reception to their latest album, *Glow On*, their strongest set of songs to date. There's a pop sheen and shoutable choruses, and the band expertly threads the needle by sounding raw enough to stay true to their roots even amid producer Mike Elizondo's enormous sonics. Pat reveals the secret: "You can get very meticulous and break down the riffs, really punch in and punch out for a lot of little spots, but a lot of what we are trying to do is capture that perfect take. The beginning of *Don't Play*, for example, where it's super fast, we thought 'Do we speed this up after recording at a slower tempo? No, let's just go into it as hard and fast as we can.' There wasn't any punching in. Where we slumped up a little bit, it was about going back, flash through the whole thing again to get the whole clip. I think that really helps make things feel a little more natural and adds the live punk aesthetic to a record."

The record also has an organic feel thanks to Pat's differing approach from lead guitarist Brady Ebert. "I am a little sloppier and a little more rhythmic," Pat says. "I can be sharp and technical, but the little flares I'm trying to add bring a live feel to it. Brady's so much

more locked in when it comes to the real ins and outs of the riff. Brady will do a track where he's blasting through and playing every little tiny thing perfectly, and I come in and do a track that's a little more imperfect to add the live feel to it."

The guitar tones on *Glow On* are awesome: fat and crunchy, with tons of clarity. The band made a conscious effort to reinvent their guitar sound for this album, while still keeping a connection to their old sounds. As always, the core tone comes from Brady's Peavey 5150, and Pat tried many combinations to complement it. "We started experimenting with a Kemper, just trying everything under the sun to remould the sound but still have it be the same as before."

Pat eventually landed on a Gretsch Duo Jet as the guitar of choice for much of the record. "I wanted to get more body and soul out of the high end of a riff, like on *Don't Play* where I'm using full chords and really emphasizing those high strings. It had a really nice touch on the whammy that wasn't as metal. The Gretsch was part of taking the 5150 out of the spotlight. No matter what, when you play an Ibanez through a 5150 you're going to get the hardest sounding thing. So when we add in the Gretsch going through a Kemper that's modelling a Marshall JCM 800, it added that rock tone that's a little eased off but still very thick. It was a nice way to accent the heaviness and the grittiness of an Ibanez going through a 5150."

Pedals were kept minimal – you can hear Brady's Boss Super Chorus and Pat's MXR Carbon Copy at times – but the most spectacular effect was a Mike Elizondo gadget: "We had this really weird thing," Pat says, "And Mike Elizondo is the only person I know that could have it. It was like a tape machine that was not made for delay but he turned it into a tape delay. We'd play the song through it and every time the delay was different. It wasn't necessarily at a certain speed; it had a different swing to it every time. It was like a ghostly weird machine. We ran everything through it that really required that airy, ethereal space sound. It looked like it was from 1940. We had to run *Alien Love Call* front to back every time because it was going through this tape machine and it was different every time. You couldn't punch in because it would sound crazy."

Live, Pat uses his 2015 Les Paul Classic into an Orange Rockerverb 50 MkIII, with limited effects: "The touring rig right now is pretty simple," he says. "I keep the MXR Carbon Copy—that's the staple I can't play without. I keep a Noise Suppressor in there, and I have two different OCDs. I've been keeping that with me just in case I want to boost part of the song. That's all I'm running right now. I try to keep it simple." His backup guitar is a Gibson Firebird.

Brady, meanwhile, has moved on from the Peavey 5150 to the newer EVH 5150 III. "He usually runs the Peavey," Pat says, "but they're hard to come by sometimes. You can always catch a 6505 but it's just a little different. The 5150 is an old amp so they're hard to get repaired sometimes. He tried the 5150 III last year and it was awesome, so we've just been sticking with that."

Pat and Brady's differing strengths make it easy to pick who plays each part: "I'm very sloppy, I'm not as technically proficient as he is, so a song like *Alien Love Call* or *Don't Play* where you can afford to be looser and just wing around a little bit, that's when we'll lean in my direction. If it's a song where it's gotta be hard, we're like, 'Brady take the intro!' It just kind of works itself out because everybody knows their strengths."

Glow On is strengthened by contributions from Blood Orange (UK singer/producer Dev Hynes). His appearance on *Alien Love Call* is a standout, but the song wasn't written with him in mind. "We had actually been playing *Alien Love Call* live for three years," Pat explains. "It was much shorter; we only had the chorus. We would just play that part as an interlude. We knew that Dev was very down to collaborate. He likes our music and we love his music, so we were like 'let's leave a couple things open just in case.' We had parts written but it was like, 'Hey, if Dev wants to get on this, let's see what he can do.' We were in LA and Dev got in the studio. He had three opportunities to sing on the record and came up with three amazing products that were just magic. We love everything he does, so anything from him was great."

The dream-pop of *Alien Love Call*, though, is a departure from the band's core melodic hardcore sound. *Glow On* sees them boldly embracing diverse sounds, with Latin American rhythms punctuating the punk rock riffage.

"MOST PEOPLE KNOW ME AS A RHYTHM PLAYER, BUT I'VE BEEN PLAYING LEAD SINCE I WAS A KID"

How did Pat develop such a physical style of guitar playing?

"I never took lessons or learned how to read sheet music. I was playing the songs that I like, so it was a matter of, 'what do I do to play the song?' A lot of it was you're playing with friends and you learn from each other, or you just experience music, like if you think something sounds cool try and play it. You'll get close, and if you don't get close, the beauty is you can just dash it out on guitar until it sounds close enough. Hardcore is more of a feeling than a very distinct thing. It's the feeling that you have when you play. You look at a guy that's just f*cking angry and playing fast and hard and not worried about 'is my form correct?' and they could be the best guitar player in hardcore. If I had advice, it's start a band. If you like how something sounds try to play it, and if you can't keep trying until you can play something close to it and you like how it sounds.

"I wanted to do my own my own thing but I kept finding it's super easy for me to imitate something. Through imitation you realize: wait, I'm not sounding like them because of something. It was just about sitting with it and playing it all the time. It really is a repetition game. If you're playing guitar in your room every day you'll realize very fast like where the flaw is.

"HARDCORE IS MORE OF A FEELING THAN A DISTINCT THING"

If you're like, 'I want to do a perfect powerchord,' if your fingers are a little weak, keep grinding and then in a month you're like, 'Wait a minute, now I got it! I can figure this out.' It's a grind."

Although it's not an obvious bid for commercial success, *Glow On*'s strong songs and Turnstile's energised live shows have critics talking about a move into the mainstream. Turnstile, though, are focused on their art. The band is a constant hive of creativity, so new music is never far away. "*Glow On* is still pretty new so we haven't thought too much about [another] record, but everybody is constantly in this creative wheel," Pat says. "You wake up one day and there's a new riff from Brendan, and Dan will have a whole new method of making noise. Everybody's constantly trying something, so it never can stop."

Words Amit Sharma

"WE LOVE MAKING WEIRD NOISES WITH OUR GUITARS!"

Masters of the seven-string, architects of nu-metal, **Korn** guitarists Munky and Head are still finding new ways to play heavy...

When we think of the innovators who shaped heavy music through the decades, Korn deserve recognition alongside more obvious names such as Iron Maiden, Metallica and Soundgarden. Formed in Bakersfield, California, Korn were, after all, the first metal group to popularise seven-string guitars – the band's two guitarists, James 'Munky' Schaffer and Brian 'Head' Welch, using the subsonic weight of the added B string to explore new uncharted tonal depths, thus inspiring players from bands such as Fear Factory and Meshuggah to follow suit and embrace a whole new world of low-end.

Korn's self-titled debut album, released in 1994, was a true game-changer – its mix of heavy riffs and hip-hop rhythms shaping the sound of nu-metal and influencing generations of bands from Slipknot and Linkin Park to rising stars of today such as Tetrarch and Cane Hill. That signature sound is still very much in evidence on the new Korn album *Requiem* – the 14th studio recording of the band's long career. The music is thunderously heavy and brilliantly melodic, with Munky and Head whipping up a seven-string storm. And now, when these guys look back on how it all started, they acknowledge the influence of one guitarist in particular.

It was super-shredder Steve Vai who helped develop the seven-string with Japanese guitar giants Ibanez in the 80s. And for Munky, a teenager back then, Vai was a hero.

"After reading interviews with Vai, I learned how he could map out what someone was saying with his instrument," Munky says now, citing Vai's intro to David Lee Roth's *Yankee Rose* – in essence, a 'conversation' between Roth's voice and Vai's guitar – as the mark of a musician wholeheartedly in tune with his instrument. "Vai could match the tonality of the human voice, using the same rhythms and lines to tell a story. I remember my mother telling me off when I was young, saying, 'You play the guitar more than you talk to us!'

"But she also pointed out that it was my true voice. I thought about this later on in life and realised she was right – anything I try to say with my voice, I can say through my guitar. Whether it's happy or sad, whatever I'm feeling can come through the guitar and out of a speaker. It was empowering. It helped me realise my purpose."

He continues: "What I learned from Steve Vai – and I'm still learning from him because he's amazing – was how he embodies the feeling he wants to transcend through his instrument. That's something I really took from him. What do I want the listener to feel? Is it pure aggression or something purely melodic? He helped me kick that door open."

Head tells the story of how Munky's fixation on Vai led inevitably to the seven-string. "I was a Vai fan too," he says, "but Munky was obsessed and followed everything he did. When he found out about the seven-string, he went to Guitar Center and was like, 'I need this!' He'd work little odd jobs to save up, getting fifty to a hundred dollars a week. After a few months, he had enough money, but even in the meantime he was always in that store playing the guitar, telling us it was his before he'd even bought it."

The day the young James Schaffer took that guitar home was unquestionably life-changing. The seven-string would become fundamental to Korn's signature sound, allowing them to go lower, harder and deeper than any band that had come before them and help create the blueprint for what would soon become known as 'nu-metal'. As Head says: "Steve Vai may have invented that guitar, but Munky had the vision for using it in heavy music."

The combination of the seven-strings, the hip-hop-inspired rhythms of bassist Fieldy and drummer David Silveria and the new wave-influenced vocals of Jonathan Davis made for a unique sound. "We started mixing all these influences to find our new sound," Head recalls. "We listened to everyone from Vai to Helmet, Nine Inch Nails, Pantera, Metallica and Faith No More, plus all this hip-hop music. Jonathan loved Duran Duran, Depeche Mode and The Cure, so it really was an interesting blend, with us embracing that low B-string on guitar. That's what was cool about nu-metal and the movement we started. We put all these genres together because we were fans and tried to make it our own, which I think we did."

"THERE WERE MOMENTS WHERE WE FELT THE CHEAPER GUITAR SOUNDED BETTER!"

HEAD

Requiem sees the band expanding on the melodic structures within that heavy sound. The album's nine tracks – totalling just over half an hour – feel remarkably tight and focused, with no shortage of powerful themes and anthemic hooks. One of the standout tracks, *Let The Dark Do The Rest*, has the band revisiting the tones of their 1998 album – and commercial breakthrough – *Follow The Leader*.

Head explains: "*Let The Dark Do The Rest* was a homage back to 1998 and the track *B.B.K.* – which had a lot of those screechy sounds. We love making weird noises with our guitars. When you kick in that Whammy pedal and push all the way down it kinda sounds like a catfight! Filling that synthy or keyboardy space using our guitars is something we love doing. Our old producer, Ross Robinson, taught us that on the first two Korn records and we stuck with it. However, at the beginning of *Let The Dark Do The Rest*, you can hear these weird piano notes… that's actually Munky playing a keyboard on his iPhone with a mic on the speaker. It just sounded so cool, he was talking about recording it on a proper piano but we all said it sounded perfect as it was because of that super lo-fi vibe."

As per classic Korn albums of the past, the new tracks showcase how the two guitarists often cover different ends of the instrument at the same time – maximising the depth of the group's collective sonic profile. There are moments on tracks such as *Lost In The Grandeur* where they're not even playing notes in the conventional sense, instead looking at their instruments purely on a noise-making level like Tom Morello of Rage Against The Machine, who started making waves in the same Californian clubs a few years before them…

"Exploring the whole fretboard to divide and conquer is extremely important," explains Munky. "When I grew up, I always felt like the higher strings and top of the neck was just for soloing. But then I started finding these staccato, dissonant sounds that were really useful. Whether it was just a noise or sound effect or even a pick scrap across the higher strings, I started to think about how I could include those things into my riffs. It filled out the spectrum, because I was using the higher and lower end of the guitar's range within the same riff…

"That's one thing I always tell new players: don't be afraid to use the higher strings or go up the neck. And it doesn't always have to be the 'traditional' way

"I WAS USING THE HIGHER AND LOWER END OF THE GUITAR'S RANGE WITHIN THE SAME RIFF"

MUNKY

of playing guitar. Come at it more like a sound designer trying to find the right noises, in combination with the low rhythmic thing on the heavy strings. It's fun for people listening through headphones. We want to put some noise candy in there for people to go, 'Woah, did you just hear that?!' Tom Morello was great at all that stuff – using the whole guitar, from the body to the hardware, as his instrument. He'd even use the strings above the nut to get these unorthodox noises, and we started doing that too, just to create more atmosphere."

Tracking the guitars for *Requiem* was very much business as usual for Munky and Head – the former sticking with his Ibanez Apex signature series, which were originally launched in 2007, and the latter handling his own custom models through ESP and LTD, having switched over from Ibanez in 2017. That said, the two guitarists also understand when situations call for something different, turning to other brands and instruments where necessary...

"We usually go through five to seven guitars each and figure out which sound best," says Head. "Every record is different because we get new guitars and the tones change depending on what the tracks needs. On this record, I used one of my ESPs and one of my signature LTDs, which was funny, because the more expensive ESP model didn't always sound the best. There were moments where we felt the cheaper guitar sounded better! I can't explain why. We'd also grab old Telecasters, Strats and Les Pauls for little bits here and there. Jonathan has all this freakin' weird old guitars, which we'd use for verse overdubs and things like that."

"We'd bring out Fenders, Gibsons and 12-strings, even this seven-string acoustic that I have," adds Munky. "I also love the Fender Bass VI. I have one that was built in Mexico but it works great, I love how growly it sounds. There was also a Starcaster in there somewhere – we'll use random guitars to add extra textures and depth to certain parts, depending on what we're trying to accomplish. If it's a nice clean melody, for example, then we'll pick up a Telecaster."

Similarly, it was a mixed bag for amplification – the Korn pair using a combination of different heads and cabs to dial in that perfect punch, favouring an old-school analogue approach to their signal path as they typically have done in the past. Though very occasionally they might have used something like an Axe-FX or Kemper for "crazy atmospheric sounds", to their ears nothing sounds better than real valves being driven through loud speakers. You simply can't beat that sensation of air being moved, insist the Korn guitar duo, and we'd be inclined to agree.

"My setup is a 150-Watt Mesa/Boogie Triple Rectifier with a Diezel and an old modded Marshall, all get blended together," continues Munky. "The Marshall goes into a Marshall cab, the others into a Mesa cab, which are mic'd using various SM57 and Royer microphones. So there are quite a few faders mixing all these tones to make one sound! Head's side has a Triple Rec, a Bogner Uberschall and an Orange. When we're both playing, you're hearing six amplifiers! We also use these really expensive room mics to get more ambient sounds. It really helps because you feel like you're in the room with the cabinet, but from a back corner. You can feel the air being moved. Even if we only use a little bit of that, it sounds cool and brings a more distant sound that the up-close ribbon mics don't catch, with its own natural reverb."

In between the guitars and amps were a host of pedals, including many enduring staples of the Korn arsenal, including that "catfight" DigiTech Whammy pitch-shifter. The pair also engaged its lower octave harmony function to create what they refer to as "tractor" sounds, in order to thicken the main riffs with a distorted sub frequency. It's an old trick that, for them, will simply never go out of fashion.

"I also had my Boss Chorus Ensemble, which I've always used for melodies," recalls Head, citing it as his go-to. "You can hear it on *Let The Dark Do The Rest* and the chorus of *Start The Healing*, just to add some colour to the melody. I'd actually say seven or eight of the nine songs had that Boss in there somewhere, even if just a little bit to add a wet kind of feel. Sometimes I might even turn every knob so it's on full blast and warbles like it's underwater. I love that sound! Munky uses a different one, the pink Ibanez BC-9, which blends really well with mine. I had my old Uni-Vibe pedal with me. Munky used an Electro Harmonix Small Stone on *Worst Is On Its Way*."

"WE CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT THEM!"

Thanks to EverTune bridges, life is peachy for Korn's guitarists

Launched roughly a decade ago, designed by engineers Cosmos Lyles and Paul Dowd, the EverTune bridge is a device that uses a spring and lever system to maintain string tension – offering a whole new level of tuning stability for guitar players. The aftermarket upgrade has proven to be particularly popular with metal guitarists who tune down, with the likes Devin Townsend and Trivium's Matt Heafy singing its praises for almost singlehandedly fixing all their tuning issues. Models for T-style and G-style six-stings to ones for seven and eight-strings range from $295 to $395 in price and sold direct through the company's website.

"All our guitars are now fitted with EverTune bridges, which has saved us a lot of time," notes Munky. "It was an invention long overdue for guitar. Floyd Roses are great because they bring this extra level of expression but tuning has been an issue for me and Head for a long time. Not only in the studio, but also on stage. It would take hours to get our guitars in tune with the intonation correct, so the EverTune bridges have worked out really great. I don't think we could live without them!"

"WHEN YOU KICK IN THAT WHAMMY PEDAL AND PUSH ALL THE WAY DOWN IT SOUNDS LIKE A CATFIGHT!"

HEAD

"TOM MORELLO WAS GREAT AT USING THE WHOLE GUITAR AS HIS INSTRUMENT"

MUNKY

"I also had a Strymon Timeline for repeats and the BigSky for those big open wet sounds," adds Munky. "I have some boutique pedals to get some crazy modulation – one of them is the Blackbox Quicksilver, which is similar to a Small Stone but it's a warbly delay. I also have this WMD Geiger Counter fuzz pedal which is really over the top and distorted… it's really dope."

There is a lot more to Korn than just seven-strings through high gain amps. "Uniqueness has always been very important to us," says Head, explaining how there's a sea of new bands and artists constantly coming out, arguably now more than ever. Those lacking a sense of strong musical identity often get pooled with the rest and disappear amongst the noise. Embrace your idiosyncrasies, he says, and celebrate whatever it is that makes you weird. After all, that's what worked for Korn.

"At the end of the day," Head says, "the best song wins, so my best advice is write, write and write. That's how to craft your skill and develop your gifts. It might take hundreds or thousands of songs until you find the one that shows you the way. I learned all my pentatonic and blues scales back in the day, they were pretty helpful. Then I moved onto major scales, running through them while watching TV, constantly practising to get the movement and finger strength. I got into Yngwie Malmsteen, George Lynch and Eddie Van Halen, but I couldn't develop a lead style that was as good. I could fake it, but those guys are on another level. It wasn't my calling to be a shredder."

He pauses for a second and points out how embracing his own limitations and oddities is precisely what got him to where he is today.

"Instead I found my own style through a band, rather than just my own solos," he says. "So we focused more on the riffs. When we wrote *Blind*, for example, we were listening to a lot of Mr. Bungle. They were so weird, with all those dissonant chords which we loved. Jonathan brought that song from his old band Sexart. We rewrote the chorus and made it really bouncy and heavy, taking it down really low. We came up with the intro because we all loved Jonathan's 'Are You Ready?!' and it needed an amazing build to get there. I look back now and think, 'What a cool, leftfield intro!' And that became our thing. When we started this band, we wanted to be weird because we love the weird…"

FOLLOW THE LEADER

Korn's influence - from Sepultura and Slipknot to the present day.

KORN BRED
Slipknot's Mick Thomson

1996
SEPULTURA

Although Sepultura formed a whole decade before Korn, the Brazilian metallers' classic 1996 album *Roots* took some major cues from the Californians. The album even featured guests spots from Korn singer Jonathan Davis on *Lookaway* and drummer David Silveria on *Ratamahatta*, and was produced by Korn's go-to guy Ross Robinson. "Sepultura adopted our nu-metal sound for a couple of records, which was really flattering," says Korn guitarist Brian 'Head' Welch. "But at the same time we were like, 'Ross, why are you giving our tone away?!'"

1999
SLIPKNOT

Slipknot's first album was released five years after Korn's, and though they would end up surpassing them commercially, the members of Slipknot have always been open about their admiration for Korn. "I feel like people have forgotten how explosive and poignant Korn were when they hit the scene," said Slipknot frontman Corey Taylor. "To me, I would put the first Korn album on the same level as *Appetite For Destruction* and *Nevermind* as far as albums that shifted things culturally."

2000
LIMP BIZKIT

Korn didn't invent rap-rock by any stretch, but they were certainly responsible for aligning hip-hop grooves with more extreme, down-tuned metal riffs. It's something Limp Bizkit took and ran with – particularly guitarist Wes Borland – spawning early noughties hits like *Break Stuff* and *Rollin'*.

Photography Steve Thrasher

2010
OF MICE & MEN

Californian metalcore quartet Of Mice & Men have been on Korn's radar for many years. As Korn guitarist Head says: "There's a lot of bands out there we've influenced, and I would say Of Mice & Men are definitely one of them, though it's very hard to replicate Korn because of Jonathan's unusual style of singing... no-one else tries or wants to do that!"

MIGHTY MOUSE
Of Mice & Men's Phil Manansala

2016
CANE HILL

As well as naming their band after psychiatric hospital in the London suburb of Croydon – which is exactly the kind of thing Korn singer Jonathan Davis would think of – this New Orleans quartet have made a name for themselves as one of the breakout groups in the recent nu-metal resurgence.

2018
POPPY

Twisting childlike innocence with macabre horror much like Korn were on *Follow The Leader*, this Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter's videos are certainly not for the faint-hearted. Drawing from a diverse pool of bubble-gum pop, industrial rock and nu-metal, she is an artist who thrives in contrasting extremes.

JEWEL BLITZ
Tetrarch's Diamond Rowe

2020
TALLAH

Featuring Max Portnoy – son of ex-Dream Theater drummer Mike Portnoy – behind the kit, Tallah certainly have a rhythmic advantage over other modern metal bands. Further intensified by the down-tuned riffs played by guitarists Derrick Schneider and Alex Snowden, it's helped establish them one of the most explosive newcomers to the modern metal scene.

2021
TETRARCH

"We like to mix nu-metal with shred stuff," Tetrarch guitarist Diamond Rowe told TG last year. "When I started learning guitar I was listening to bands like Korn, Slipknot and Linkin Park – they were the contemporary metal bands of my teenage years. That's where we are coming from musically."

Photography Gina Wetzler, Justin Higuchi

He has long been revered as one of the most technically astounding and musically gifted guitarists on the planet, but on his new album, *The Elephants Of Mars*, Joe Satriani set himself one heck of a challenge.

"I thought: I need to raise my own bar," he says. "I want a Joe Satriani record to sound better, have better compositions, more interesting arrangements, and, somehow, I've got to get my playing to be better."

In this mission, he stuck to five simple rules – as he outlines here...

Never ignore the gift of inspiration

Very often, a little cinematic reel starts to go off in my head. I was taught at a very early age never to let that go, never ignore the gift of inspiration because you can't manufacture it: you're either inspired or you're not. I hold on to it and I don't let go until I have a palpable representation of that inspiration. If it's something like *Blue Foot Groovy*, it's very light and fun, but if it's something like *Desolation* or *Sahara*, it's serious and it'll take its toll emotionally on me. If you're by yourself or with family, you open-up and feel comfortable to bare your soul, so you can work on it and not feel shy.

Use tools to communicate your creative vision

When you get a tool – like a pedal, Sustainiac, or whammy bar – you get intimate with it and realise it could be an extension of some phrase or approach that's going to be the cornerstone of a song. The day I decided to rearrange the title track to have this long guitar solo, I wanted to do something really rough and spontaneous. I had a Palmer Y-BOX, and I decided to record myself in stereo, so one side went into a Millennia

"A SONG ABOUT ELEPHANTS ON MARS HAS TO BE WEIRD!"

HV37, and the other through a Micro Q-Tron. Now, this thing isn't a high-end piece of gear, and what I found, after I recorded that whole solo, was that it didn't stay in stereo 100% of the time, which I found very interesting. The song was about elephants on Mars, so it had to be weird! Once I got that sound, it was inspiring, and I decided to use the symmetrical scale to do all the soloing.

Know your scales like the street you grew up on

Imagine you're set down in a foreign city and you have to figure out how to get across town to some specific location. That's like not knowing where scales are on the guitar. The guitar is very convoluted – you've got the same notes available in different places. Now, the opposite would be imagining the street where you grew up and how easy it is to get from there to six blocks over. You'd probably know twelve different ways of getting to your friend's house. That's how familiar this fretboard has to become. I put the time in and started embracing this huge task when I was a teenager.

Embrace unique tones when you find them

I had Ibanez make me an all-mahogany, 7-string guitar with humbuckers. I think I started using it on [2002 album] *Strange Beautiful Music*. Primarily I'm a 6-string player, so every time I pick this thing up I have to keep reminding myself it's a B string! It's what I used on *Through A Mother's Day Darkly*. I really do like this guitar, but it hadn't been played since Mike Keneally played it years ago, so the strings were really old. When I first pulled it out of the case, I immediately wrote the song *Tension And Release* because the strings were so wobbly and old. I quickly recorded all the parts with the dirty strings because I liked the wobbly sound!

No amp? No problem...

All these amps were recorded for the album, but none were used. The shocking thing was that we wound-up choosing SansAmp plugin recordings. I always record direct – I have since 1999 – and we'll often record amps in the studio simultaneously, and/or re-amp later. So, if we have a performance that's DI and we move studios, we can re-amp it into a new Fender or Marshall that just came into the party. But this time, I tried everything. I'd do a performance and have the Marshall or a 5150, some Fenders and some modelling things, and ultimately, the biggest sound – the one that seemed to bring the sound of my fingers to the listener – was the SansAmp.

Joe Satriani's new album The Elephants Of Mars is released on April 8.

Words Ellie Rogers **Photo** Eduardo Peña Dolhun

"I need to raise my own bar..."

Every guitarist wants to play better – and **Joe Satriani** is no exception.

Words Ellie Rogers **Photos** Kit Wood

"MY JOB IS TO SING, PLAY GUITAR AND MAKE THE AUDIENCE FEEL SOMETHING"

Blues sensation **Joanne Shaw Taylor** loves being back on the road. She only gets nervous when she plays for friends – like Joe Bonamassa...

Since she was a teenager playing the West Midlands pub circuit, Joanne Shaw Taylor has been hailed as one of the finest contemporary blues guitarists to emerge from the UK scene in recent memory. But until September last year, she'd never cut an album that was pure blues from top to tail.

Cue *The Blues Album*, a record produced by blues megastar Joe Bonamassa, and stuffed full of deep cuts from the likes of Little Milton, Albert King and Magic Sam. It was an album that Joanne had always wanted to make, and it was met with widespread acclaim.

Now, two years after her last tour was curtailed by the pandemic, Joanne returns to the stage in April with a run of six blues-loaded concerts – armed with her number one guitar, "Junior", a 1966 Fender Esquire.

What led you to make *The Blues Album*?

I'd never really considered myself a blues artist. I'm hugely blues-influenced, and it wasn't intentional not to be a blues artist. All my guitar influences were predominantly blues, but when it came to learning to sing, I couldn't sound like Albert Collins or Howlin' Wolf. I tried, but it just wasn't happening! So when it came to finding female singers I could relate to, it tended to be Tina Turner and Aretha Franklin – more soul stuff. Over the years, I've become this artist that's a blend of blues, soul and pop. The other thing is, I don't feel like I've ever been able to write blues songs. Usually traditional blues songs are 1-4-5 and written around a really good hook. You know, *Smokestack Lightning* doesn't really have many lyrics to it other than "*Aaahoo* smokestack lightning!" And I'm just not that kind of writer.

So you decided on an album of covers.

Yes, I'd always wanted to do a proper, contemporary-but-traditional blues album, and I knew, to do that, I'd probably have to do all covers. After Covid, I was really excited to get back to music and just enjoy doing it. I happened to be talking to my best friend, Joe Bonamassa, about it and he was very encouraging and started sending me song ideas to the point where I said, 'Look, do you want to produce this, because you're already kind of producing it?'

In blues there's a lot of well-travelled material. How did you make your song choices?

'Well-travelled' is a polite way of saying it – there are songs that have been done to death! From the get-go, me and Joe said: 'We're not doing *Sweet Home Chicago* or *Mustang Sally* or anything off the *Blues Brothers* soundtrack.' For me, it's all about the lyrics. Particularly as a female, I've got to sing something that represents me, and is something I can feel, like Little Richard's *I Don't Know What You've Got*. I will admit that there were also some songs I'd played when I was fourteen or fifteen, doing the pub circuit around the West Midlands, that I wanted to go back to now that I'm not singing like a fourteen year-old Solihull school girl!

Guitar-wise, which tracks or solos are you most proud of?

All of them! The fun thing about this was that the solos were easy. We barely did many takes. The biggest challenge, which sounds stupid, was that I was quite scared of playing in front of Joe. Two of the best guitar players in the world produced this album – Bonamassa and Josh Smith – who I hugely admire. But also, I get quite nervous playing in front of people I know. Me and Joe are very good friends, so it was the worst of both worlds!

Joe is well known for his vintage gear collection – did you use much of it?

I actually kept it simple. I was planning to use all of his gear. At the time of recording, the vaccine wasn't available, so I didn't want to risk getting something on a plane and passing it on to anybody else in the session. So I drove from where I live in Detroit down to

"MY GUITAR'S NAME IS JUNIOR. THAT'S FAIR SINCE ALL THE BOYS NAME THEIRS AFTER FEMALES!"

"I'D ALWAYS WANTED TO DO A PROPER, CONTEMPORARY BUT TRADITIONAL BLUES ALBUM"

Nashville, and loaded my car with a suitcase and one guitar. I phoned him and was like, 'You do know I'm not bringing sh*t to this session?' Who goes to Nerdville and takes their own gear? It just felt stupid. When I got down, we used a few of his amps, but I really struggled to play his guitars. I didn't realise how different our set-ups are. We both have quite a high action – actually, I have a higher action than Joe – but I didn't realise he uses gauge 12 strings. I use 10s or 11s, and he tunes to standard while I tune down a half-step, so I realised pretty swiftly that these were big boy guitars and none were going to suit me!

Tell us about the guitar you took.

His name is Junior. I think it's fair that I get male guitars since all the boys name theirs after females! I found him on Denmark Street when I was fifteen. I'd been playing for a couple of years, gigging, and was working in a guitar shop on weekends. My Nan and Dad said they'd match whatever I made as a reward for working hard, and I managed to get together £1,200. With Esquires, there's always a gap underneath the scratch plate where you could put a neck pick-up, and I think the previous owner had attacked it with a knife and gouged it out doing a home job to put a humbucker in. So I got it slightly cheaper. I just love him. It's a bright guitar which I love, and the rosewood neck really suits me – it's a comfort thing at this point.

What's it been like being off the road for so long, and are you excited to be heading back?

To be honest, I was utterly burned-out after thirteen years, non-stop on the road. I was in really bad shape and really struggling. You can't run at that speed and you can't live like that. What's been great is, since I've returned, you see posters in every venue saying 'this is not a normal way of earning a living – here's a phone number if you're struggling on the road'. It's really cool that we're starting to talk more about mental health. Fortunately for me, I have a brilliant tour manager, and Sony – who I was with at the time – were fantastic. They said if I could get to the end of the year they would give me six months off. Then Covid hit and I got two years off, so it was a case of being careful what you wish for! But we're out now and it's fantastic – I've been absolutely loving it. The main thing I've taken from the time off is how lucky I am to do this.

CHARMED LIFE

"The main thing I've taken from the time off is how lucky I am to do this," Joanne says

When it comes to playing live, what type of tone do you like and how do you go about getting it?

The dream is to do what we did on the album: two amps, turned up. At the moment I'm running two Fender Bassmans. I've got two vintage '63 Piggybacks. The idea is to crank them, and that's your tone. Sometimes I'll run a Tube Screamer but without the distortion as a boost.

So there's no chain of pedals to worry about?

No, we didn't use any on the album, and live, I'm not a fan of pedals. I keep talking to my friend Carmen Vandenberg, who's in a band called BONES. They did an album with Jeff Beck and we've talked about doing a project together. For that I'd bring everything and experiment with as many different sounds as possible. But I'm very much going for a traditional thing here – so it's a≈Holy≈Grail Reverb and a tuner and I'm happy! My job is to sing, play guitar and make the audience feel something, so if you're constantly looking down to see which pedal needs to be turned on for a solo and then off for the verse, it brings you out of the show a little bit.

Photo Getty

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ICON

Jason Pierce

Interview Tim Tucker Portraits Sarah Piantadosi

HE CREATES COMPLEX, EPIC SOUNDSCAPES WITH SPIRITUALIZED, BUT CALLS HIMSELF AN "INEPT" GUITARIST. "IT'S ABOUT THE SOUL," JASON PIERCE SAYS, "NOT THE ABILITY..."

Jason Pierce spent the 1980s co-fronting Spacemen 3 as J. Spaceman, with whom he developed a minimalist psychedelic sound inspired by Iggy Pop, The Velvet Underground and 1960s garage rock. The band split in the early 1990s and Pierce went on to form Spiritualized, under which name he still records and performs today.

The band's second album, Pure Phase, broke sonic boundaries with its blend of space rock, guitar drones and shimmering effects. 1997's *Ladies and Gentlemen We Are Floating In Space* gave the band its mainstream breakthrough and the NME awarded them album of the year (beating Radiohead's *OK Computer*). Since then, Pierce has worked with artists as diverse as Dr John, Yoko Ono, Ariel Pink and Black Rebel Motorcycle Club. He released a solo album, *Guitar Loops*, composed music for the 2007 film Mister Lonely and has had his songs featured in movies including *V For Vendetta* and *Vanilla Sky*.

April 22 sees the release of Spiritualized's ninth album, *Everything Was Beautiful*. It's a return to a more live sound, blending elements of blues, rock and roll, country, gospel and free jazz. Still the scale is huge, with Pierce himself playing 16 different instruments and employing over 30 musicians, to create the expansive soundscapes the band are renowned for.

He has an experimental approach to guitar which, as he explains to TG, was forged at an early age…

Find your own path.

I got my first guitar when I was quite young, maybe seven years old. I vaguely remember a couple of lessons that didn't make any sense. I learned like everybody learns, you just hit the thing, and after a few weeks you find you can do something else, and then it never stops. But if you like the sound of it, and you like what you're doing, it's endlessly fascinating. That's the excitement and the thrill of electric guitar. Learning the rudiments, even learning the parts from other people's records, never really interested me. It just felt like something that was too hard and too time consuming. That's why I still can't play anybody else's songs.

Ability isn't everything.

Whatever it is about those doo-wop chords, 12-bar, the blues... there it all is. I'm not astounded by people's abilities, or the way people play or the way they sing. It's about passion, it's about the soul, about the fever, the rush and the excitement of it, not about the ability. I still feel as inept as I did when I started. I still can't recognise the key people are playing in. I will hit every single note on every single fret on the guitar until I find the one that matches.

There's a limited vocabulary for rock and roll.

I don't think it's important to look

for originality. There is no originality in music, it's all based on the same musical knowledge. I think you choose things on how close it is to the musical world you inhabit, or you love, not on some arbitrary fashion, or how original it is. And I guess when it comes too close, you say, 'Okay, we can't do that, that's too close, or that's not dissimilar enough.' Often it's hammering at it until something amazing comes. And not letting go. I edit up when making records. Most people edit twenty songs down to eleven. I edit four up to seven. If anything we're doing is worth pursuing, then it's worth trying to find the song in it.

Jamming isn't for everyone.
All bands form by osmosis. You spend time together and you get more and more into the same kinds of music on the road. That's when we started to play some of the more free-form passages like The Stooges, The Velvet Underground, Sun Ra and Albert Ayler. But not showing your weird tricks, because that just sounds like five people in a room sharing what they can do. It only works when it serves the song. It's not about playing – it's about listening. That's the problem with jamming, it seems to be a vehicle for one or two people to solo over. We never jam as a band. Even the word sounds like some kind of folly, like, why would you want to do that? The thing with improvised music is you can't rehearse it, because then it completely ceases to be improvised.

You only need a chord to write a song.
I'm a big believer in pushing the simplest of ideas as far as they can go. When most people get tired and think 'I should go somewhere else with this', I'm still thinking, 'No this is amazing, what an amazing thing to be able to do'. I tend to hit the same things all the time on the guitar, but you only need a chord to write a song. Often I start by singing the lines. On the guitar I have to work things out, work out the structure, but if you sing the tune, you can go anywhere, you're not held back by your ability to play. Most of it's written like that.

Songs find their own place.
With the song *Crazy*, I wanted a string quartet on it, but I couldn't afford it. So we used the Mellotron and then suddenly we've got this country song that doesn't feel like it should fit. It was always going to go towards a Patsy Cline, small-band kind of thing, and that's where it felt comfortable. Songs find their own place to be. You push them around and you go with what works and then they find this place, whatever the intentions you had when you start.

Brighter isn't better.
I remember years ago working with Bob Ludwig in America. At the time he was mastering The Rolling Stones' records and the record company constantly kept saying 'Brighter, brighter', like it was a competition. And he made them go out and buy the 1970s vinyl and listen to what was on the record, and they're actually quite dark sounding. Spotify and most of the streaming services have done that as well, the sound gets brighter and it's coming out of smaller speakers. But making it brighter and louder doesn't make it better.

FREE SPIRIT
"It's endlessly fascinating," Jason says. "That's the excitement and the thrill of electric guitar."

Find the parts that make sense.
A lot of this record was put down during lockdowns. We used the studio for stuff I couldn't do anywhere else: small choirs, drum kits and percussion instruments. The guitars were done individually, so it wasn't really about making arrangements. Each of the

"WE NEVER JAM AS A BAND. WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO DO THAT?"

"JUST HIT A CHORD!"

Jason has an understated guitar style. "I'm not very big on my guitar playing," he says. "I just put a guitar on my shoulder and hit a chord. And that's the thrill. It's usually an open chord, an E or an A, something you can play with one finger!"

Jason varies the textures of his chord playing by changing the attack, sometimes using all downstrokes, in the style of The Velvet Underground, at other times picking the notes of the chord individually, as arpeggios. He'll also vary the open chord voicings occasionally to change the sound. For example, in the acoustic version of *Lord, Let It Rain On Me* from the *Amazing Grace* album, the chords are standard open D to G chords, but he shifts between a straight open D chord to an alternate D7 voicing to change the sound.

HIS GUITARS

"I've got three Fender Thinlines, and there's one of them, the pink one, that just feels like my guitar," Jason says. "It chimes like a piano. I don't even know what the pickups are, but they don't sound like a regular Telecaster. That's the one I just reach for. I like the [Fender] Jaguar 'cos it's got these switches. You can just start messing with the switches and that gives you a whole new place to go. And with the [Fender] Jazzmaster you get another set of strings on the other side of the bridge, and you get a whammy bar; that's going to take you somewhere else. But saying that, we've been rehearsing this week and I still feel like I can do better with the limited range of the Thinline. As soon as I use the switches and the sympathetic strings and all of that, there's more room to f*ck up. With the Gibson L00 acoustic, it really did feel like it had these songs already in the body of it when I bought it. I've never really written on acoustic guitar before, so maybe that's part of it as well. It's easier to play open C, F and G on an acoustic than it is on the electric. It's a beautiful guitar, it's from the 1920s.

THE SOUND

"Not a lot has changed in my guitar sound over the years," he says. "I've got two distortions, one's a tube. I've got the Coloursound Wah. I've got a Vox Invader that's got all the trems, distortions and tone bender built into it, so if I want something a little bit more extreme I've got that to hand. I experiment with new sounds a bit in the studio, but it's like sitting with synths and going through every single tonal possibility – ninety nine percent of it just doesn't interest me. And then as soon as I hear a Farfisa, or a Vox, or a Fender Rhodes, I'm like, 'There it is.' Because they're instruments. I'm kind of fascinated with the fact that they're just instruments that make that noise.

guitars is a different instrument. The [Fender] Jazzmaster sounds quite different from a [Fender] Thinline. So quite often playing live, it's as simple as having three different sounding guitars that make the space for themselves. There are two hundred individual tracks of music on some of these songs. When we play live we're essentially a six-piece, so you have to find the parts that make sense and the parts that you need to cover, but not in a way that takes all the enjoyment out of playing it.

Push things to their limits.

I spent a whole American tour smashing my guitars. I remember being on tour with the Dirtbombs, and Mick [Collins of the Dirtbombs] saying, 'Please tell me those aren't 60s and 70s guitars.' And they were, they were getting destroyed, but it felt like that's the tail end of trying to go as far as you can, when you've got nowhere else to go. And after a while my guitar tech said, 'If you're gonna do that, let's give you a fake guitar so I'm not gluing your guitars together every night'. And as soon as it became fake I didn't do it. Because it wasn't a show business thing, it was, 'let's push this as far as it can go.'

Keep an open mind.

It would be better if we took the songs out and played them live before recording them. It's always been hard to do that, because then people have copies of the song ahead of the release. There's something about the initial moment of contact with a song which is really important. Within a year of playing live, though, they're almost a different thing.

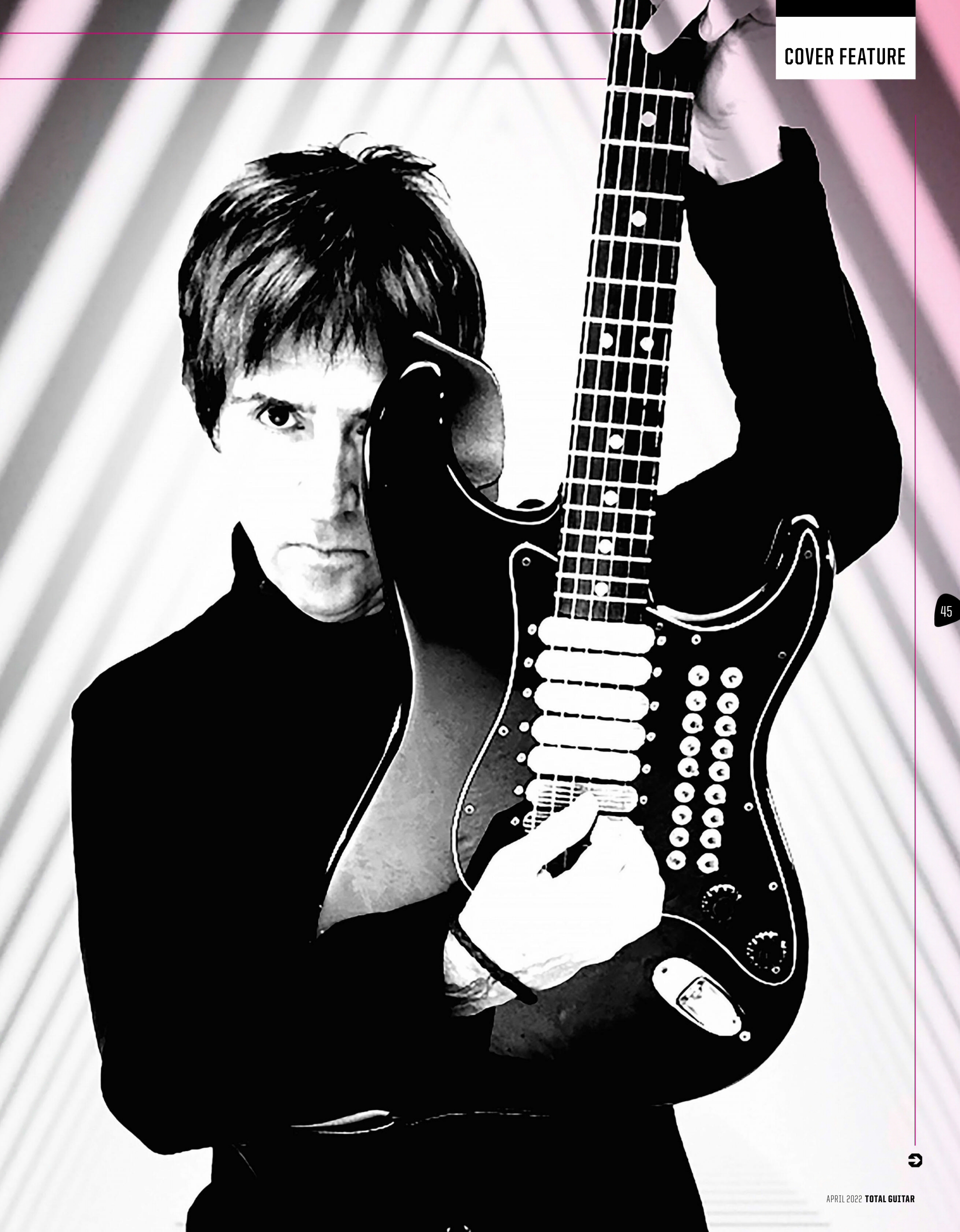
Record everything...

The Beatles' *Get Back* documentary was beautiful. Their process is exactly the same as anybody else in the studio. It's what you do as an artist, you go through the moves. Obviously it's been edited so you're not seeing the kind of errors and mistakes and whatever, but John Lennon's solos are the same every time he plays *Get Back*. It's been worked out with the same process that everybody goes through to arrive at a song. And then little bits change as they perform. When we record, it's interesting how fast people forget what they're doing, and the good bits kind of go, they disappear for no reason. When you're able to record everything, they don't go, because you can always reference back.

Interview Rod Brakes **Photos** Andy Cotterill, Niall Lea, Fraser Taylor, Johnny Marr

"IT'S MY SOUND. I F*CKING INVENTED IT. I CAN USE IT AS MANY TIMES AS I LIKE!"

Johnny Marr is an inspiration to countless guitarists. In a major new interview he discusses his entire career – from **The Smiths** to his latest solo masterpiece. And also included in this 20-page TG special: how to play like Marr, with three classic Smiths riffs to learn, plus exclusive interviews with the **Red Hot Chili Peppers**' John Frusciante, **Manic Street Preachers**' James Dean Bradfield and **The Killers**' Dave Keuning on the genius of Johnny...



JOHNNY MARR

On October 4, 1982, an 18-year-old Johnny Marr walked on to the stage at the Ritz in Manchester to perform his first gig with The Smiths. A lifelong guitar devotee, Johnny had been playing in various local bands since the age of 13. The Wythenshawe lad had "served an apprenticeship" and was ready to take on the world. Four decades on, as he speaks to TG from his Manchester home, it is obvious Johnny's enthusiasm, curiosity, and love for playing guitar remains as strong as ever.

His latest solo album – *Fever Dreams Pts 1-4* – is an expansive sonic masterpiece that brings together myriad styles while somehow managing to retain that quintessential Johnny Marr sound. The secret lies in his instrument of choice. "Me and my band feel a duty to represent the guitar," Johnny says. "As more time has gone on, I've reverted to the idea that if there is space for an instrumental passage then it has to be done on the guitar, because that's what people want from me."

Johnny Marr co-founded The Smiths, the groundbreaking British indie band, just when the guitar world was in dire need of a new kind of antihero. Johnny's inimitable tone underscored the band's gritty elegance and forged an aesthetic that has galvanised generations of guitar players since.

Within The Smiths' five-year lifespan, Johnny recorded a slew of timeless tracks that remain touchstones of guitar technique. By the time the guitarist had parted ways with his band in 1987, he had established himself as one of the most in-demand players around. At the age of 23, Johnny had already created the kind of legacy many hope to achieve in a lifetime. And yet the young guitarist's musical life was only just gathering momentum.

Before long, Johnny found himself in the studio with the likes of new wave pioneers Talking Heads and The Pretenders, even touring with the latter for a brief period. Since then, his work as a session player has seen him hopping genres with a plethora of musicians including Bryan Ferry, Billy Bragg, Bert Jansch, Hans Zimmer, Noel Gallagher, Beck and John Frusciante.

At the same time, Johnny has pursued various longer-term projects. Riding high on the wave of Manchester's late 80s rave scene he joined forces with Joy Division and New Order founder Bernard Sumner to form Electronic, releasing a trio of albums throughout the 90s. Simultaneously, Johnny became a fully-fledged member of post-punk outfit The The, stamping his unique identity into the band's sound as they scaled the charts with hits like *The Beat(en) Generation* and *Dogs Of Lust*.

As a new millennium got underway, Johnny's career took a more direct turn with Johnny Marr + The Healers. Having self-produced the group's 2003 album, *Boomslang*, Johnny confidently stepped into his role as a name artist and frontman (though fans would patiently have to wait another decade for his first bona fide solo release).

In the meantime, Johnny immersed himself in several other collaborative projects, notably American indie rockers Modest Mouse, with whom he recorded 2007's US Billboard 200 number one album *We Were Dead Before The Ship Even Sank*. The following year, Johnny teamed up with Wakefield alt-rock brothers The Cribs – a creative venture that culminated in the 2009 UK top ten album *Ignore The Ignorant*. Appearing at major festivals including Glastonbury and Lollapalooza, he toured extensively with the band until finally deciding to focus on a solo career.

Unveiled in 2013, *The Messenger* album heralded the arrival of Johnny Marr the solo artist. Co-produced with long-time collaborator James Doviak (better known simply as Doviak) this was quickly followed up by *Playland* in 2014 and the *Adrenalin Baby* live album in 2015. After spending a year writing the candid autobiography *Set The Boy Free*, Johnny then continued to follow his calling as a solo artist, emerging triumphant from the studio in 2018 with a third album, *Call The Comet*.

Now, *Fever Dreams Pts 1-4* continues his trailblazing trajectory. "If people want to know what I do as a solo artist," he says, "it's all there across four or five

"LIKE EVERYBODY WHO READS YOUR MAGAZINE, I'M A SUCKER FOR GUITAR GADGETS AND TECHNOLOGY"

albums." In a lengthy conversation, Johnny talks in depth about his latest endeavours as a solo artist and reflects upon his long and varied musical career as one the UK's most influential guitar players.

How does *Fever Dreams Pts 1-4* compare to your previous solo album, *Call The Comet*?

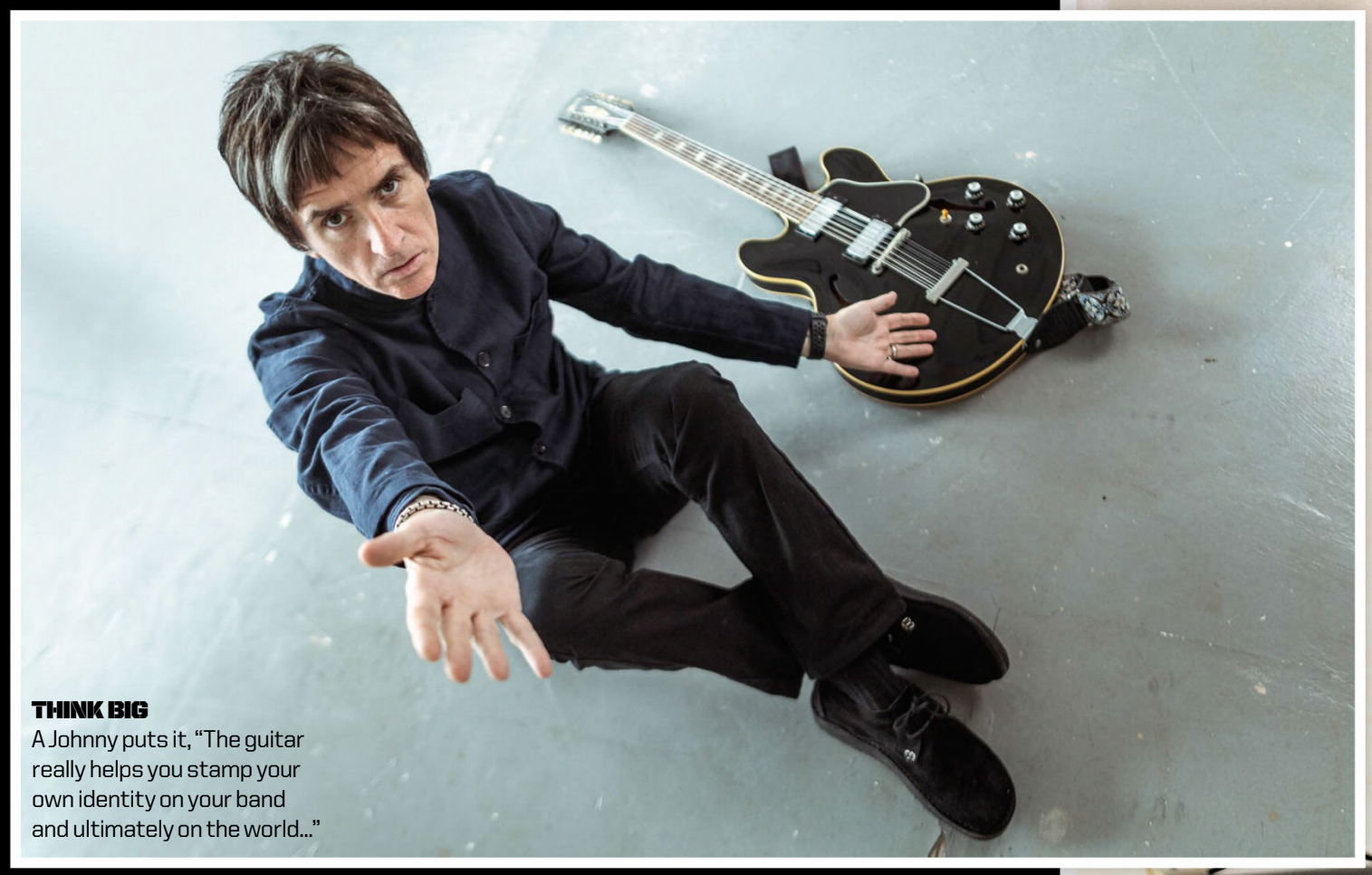
With *Fever Dreams*, I was going into my studio in this old factory building during the daytime on my own – this big industrial space with all these windows which were flooded with light. It was completely the opposite to my experience recording the previous album which was very much nocturnal. And that's why the album cover is the way it is – the picture of me in a completely empty room with no one else around. That was my experience of making the record and I think that's seeped into a lot of the music. I get a lot of the basic ideas together on my own in my own setup and then I call [James] Doviak in, my co-producer. He's a Jedi on Pro Tools. But I've also been operating Pro Tools for many years, so I do know that stuff. I got even more into the sonics on this album than any other. For a very long time, I was the guy who was first in the studio in the morning and the last to leave. Like when I was producing with Electronic, I tended to be in there first thing and leave last because it was my studio. In my thirties and forties I was very into engineering and programming, but then when I started with the solo band it was just a good idea to get someone in who can take over.

What were you going for in terms of overall sound with this new album?

I wanted it to be slightly more hi-fi than the last record. My frame of mind was more about the kind of technology I was using. I think that may have been something to do with the pandemic, but it was also just where my head was at. Because I'd decided it was going to be a double album, that gave me the idea, maybe subconsciously, that the sound was going to be a bit more expansive.

What does the title *Fever Dreams* mean to you?

I had the title *Fever Dreams* before the pandemic, but what was happening to everybody fed into the concept of the record. I wanted to write about consciousness and perception. For the song *Hideaway Girl*, I wrote the lyric



THINK BIG
A Johnny puts it, "The guitar really helps you stamp your own identity on your band and ultimately on the world..."

"Every day is a fever dream". I don't know about you, but my experience of lockdown was of time not meaning what it should. I've had conversations with people where it seemed like weeks were whizzing by in seconds. And then other times a day would feel like a week.

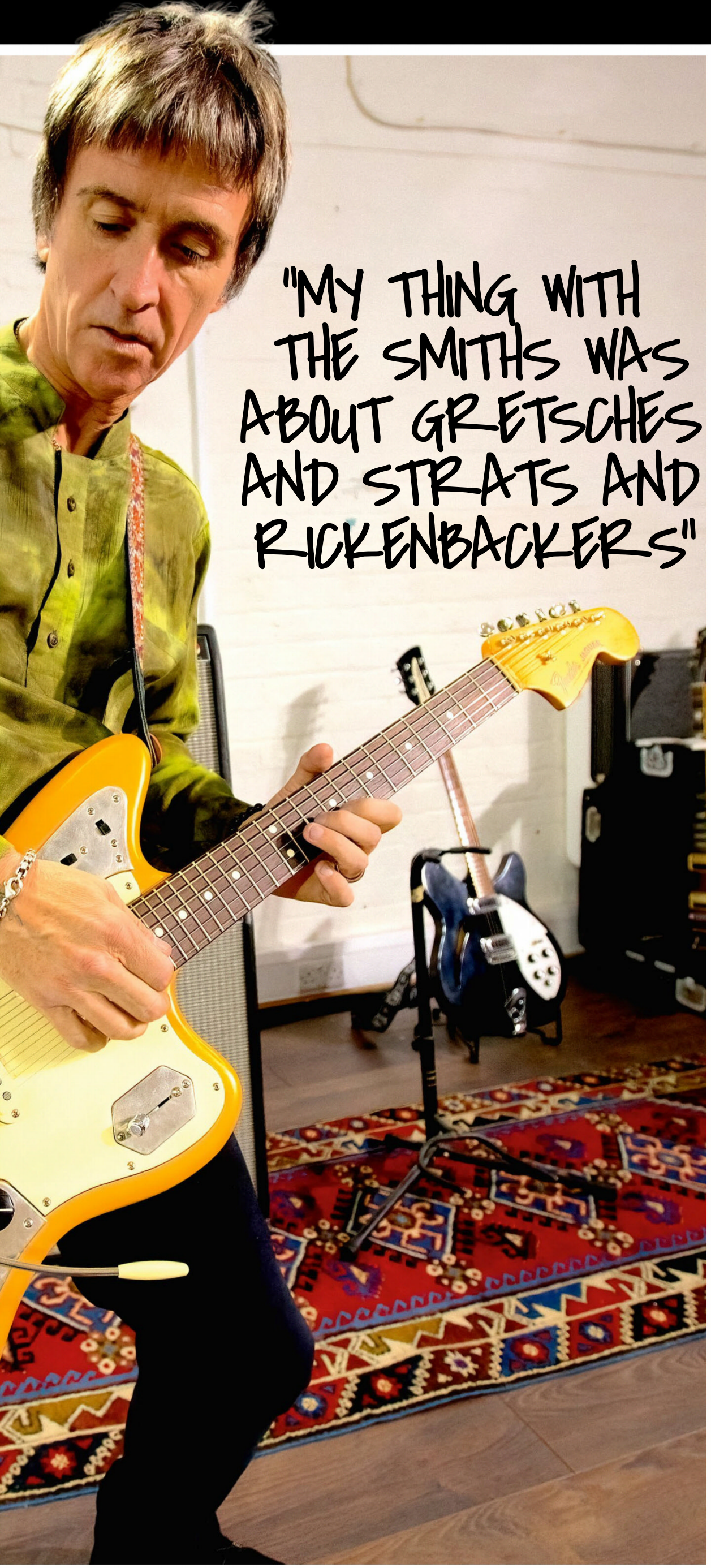
Practically speaking, how did you go about fine-tuning the sounds to fit your vision?
I paid more attention to the software plug-ins I'd bought whilst being out on the road. I also borrowed a drum machine from Steve Morris [Joy Division, New Order] which was a good thing because he was very helpful when some of the software wasn't behaving like it should have been. So, thanks Steve!

What guitar effects did you use across this album?
Like pretty much everybody who reads your magazine, I'm a sucker for guitar gadgets and technology. But I tend to have a pretty good and quick instinct for what sounds are going to work for overdubs. I've always tended to be able to find a sound to go with a part. Usually, the part comes first in my ears. And then I kind of go, 'I know that'll work really well on an MXR flanger' or 'the Carl Martin chorus pedal on a really slow speed will really do the job there,' for example. There is a lot of Uni-vibe on this record. I've got a 90s Roger Mayer Voodoo Vibe – they're really great. And I've got a Fulltone Deja'Vibe. It's a sound that not every pedal maker gets right.

The song Sensory Street is built on a Uni-Vibe riff. That was a Hendrix-style riff I was kicking around. There's also a fair bit of the Boss RT-20 Rotary [Ensemble] used on the album. The other Boss pedal I really love is the TR-2 Tremolo. During my days in The The and Modest Mouse, I experimented a lot with modulation – even ring modulation. There are a few different things I like. You can go round and round forever with these things, but the chorus in the Kemper is really good, I like Electro-Harmonix stuff, and the [Strymon] BlueSky, Eventide... the list goes on and on. But overall, Boss pedals are great, and the Carl Martin pedals are really beautiful. I use the Carl Martin [Headroom] reverb pedal a lot.

What gain pedals do you like to use?
For years now I've used the Carl Martin AC-Tone and PlexiTone. They work really well with my [Fender] Jaguar[s].

What guitars did you use on the album?
I used the new Jaguar a lot, of course. I also used a Yamaha SG-1000 quite a bit. The Yamaha SGs are really great instruments to play. Around the time I left school in 1980, a lot of the innovative players had switched to the [Yamaha] SG, most notably John McGeoch [of Siouxsie And The Banshees]. Andy Partridge was playing one in XTC for a while. Stuart Adamson was playing one with Skids. And also [Be-Bop Deluxe founder] Bill Nelson, who



"HE'S FEARLESS!"

The joys of working with Johnny: by **Primal Scream** bassist Simone Marie Butler.

Simone Marie Butler has played bass for Primal Scream for the past decade, in which time Johnny Marr has made guest appearances at several of the band's gigs. Johnny recently returned the compliment by inviting Simone to his Manchester studio to record on *Fever Dreams Pts 1-4*.

As Johnny says: "You really get to know what a band's about when you've got them very loud in your ears. Two of the three songs Simone's done were really built around the groove, which was why I had her in mind when I was writing them. She's on three songs: *Lightning People*, which I was specifically saving for her, *Counter-Clock World*, and a moody one called *The Speed Of Love*, which she did a really amazing job with. I'd played bass on the demo, and it was pretty rambling, but she ran with it. Simone did exactly what was needed for the track – and brought it up several levels. She was great."

A student of Johnny's work over the years, Simone expressed nothing but gratitude and admiration in return. "It was immediately apparent when I first met Johnny that he's an incredibly genuine soul who is driven by his love for music, and his love for discovering new music," Simone says. "It was a pleasure and an honour to have worked with him. I find him to be an extremely inspiring and galvanising musician to listen to, talk to, and be around.

"One of the things Johnny has been able to do is create this visceral characteristic tone on a record that is always clearly him. His sound is immediately identifiable. Tonally and stylistically, I can hear his sound in a lot of modern bands. Undoubtedly, he has inspired lots of musicians – myself included. But it's not just his tone; it's also about his attitude towards music – his passion for experimentation and working with different artists. He has a fearlessness that allows him to go in different directions.

"Working with him in the studio, it is clear to see his commitment and dedication. He's a consummate professional but he's also incredibly easy going, funny, generous and creative. And I find that just as inspiring as the music he has committed to vinyl."

was very important to my generation. As good as those players were, when I left school, I wanted to do something of my own. Vintage guitars were the holy grail for me. So, I sidestepped the Yamaha. My thing with The Smiths was about Gretsches and Strats and Rickenbackers. Doviak and I decided to track Yamaha SGs down about ten years ago. They do the thing a Les Paul does, but with a different kind of articulation. And those pickups are a little more hi-fi. They're a good alternative to a Les Paul. And they were beautifully made. They make me play in a very precise way. I also used my Smiths 1980s red Les Paul with the Bigsby. That's always on the records. That's been on more records than any other guitar, including [The Smiths' 1985 classic] *Meat Is Murder*. I use that a lot to play clean arpeggios and to double [track] the Jag. It adds a real creaminess. I use a couple of '73 Les Paul Customs for that kind of glam thing. You can hear that on *Tenement Time* particularly. I always have the Jag in there somewhere. But the Les Paul made me come up with the riff for that song. It's a very glam rock kind of song.

Which 12-string guitars did you use?
I used a new Auden 12-string acoustic. They're really beautiful, well-made acoustics. I used that on *Counter-Clock World* to do a pseudo-Eddie Cochran thing. I sometimes double lead parts to make it stand out a little bit. For my 12-string electric sound I used a Gibson EDS-1275 double neck. I discovered those by accident when I was recording *Inception* [with Hans Zimmer]. It was about one o'clock in the morning and the sound still wasn't right, but I wasn't ready to call it a day. I knew it had to be a 12-string but the only one in the building happened to be a double-neck. I thought, 'alright, I'll give it a go,' and so I strapped myself in and it turned out to be the best 12-string sound ever! The combination of the [shallow] SG depth, that larger width, and the humbucker sound all adds up to a darker, deeper picture. It darkens that 12-string top-end chime up in a really good way. Also, you can leave the other unused half of the guitar ringing out in an open tuning, which sometimes works well at high volume. When I was recording the Bond movie [*No Time To Die*] soundtrack, I happened to come across a single-neck 12-string SG, which is a bit of a rarity. I owned a black [Gibson ES-] 335-12 back in the day. In fact, up until the last album, that's what I was using.

What amps did you use this time?
I tend to always use the same amps – my '64/'65 Fender Deluxe Reverb and a Fender Super Reverb from around 2008 (my Modest Mouse amp). I also used an early 60s Fender Twin and a late 60s Marshall Plexi. But for some parts I used an HH Electronics combo – it's got some really nasty solid-state distortion. For this album, I also dug out my old Roland JC-120 Jazz Chorus amp. Transistor amps have a sonic presence that puts the sound right in your face. It's sort of an Ennio Morricone sound. Some of the best examples of transistor amps are on the first Buzzcocks album, *Another Music In A Different Kitchen* – songs like *Autonomy* and *Fiction Romance*. Miking up a Roland JC-120 is very pleasing. The chorus sound is incredible.

THE MAN IN BLACK
"With this album," Marr says, "I decided to just do what the hell I wanted."

The Roland JC-120 was one of the amps you used during the earliest days of The Smiths. It's nice to hear some of those familiar sounds on *Fever Dreams*...
Sonically, I feel like I was let off the leash a little bit. I kind of decided to just do what the hell I wanted. When I've been talking about the album, I've started to notice that some people are

"A LOT OF BRITISH ROCK MUSIC FROM THE LATE 90S WAS LIKE A LAME IMITATION OF OK COMPUTER"

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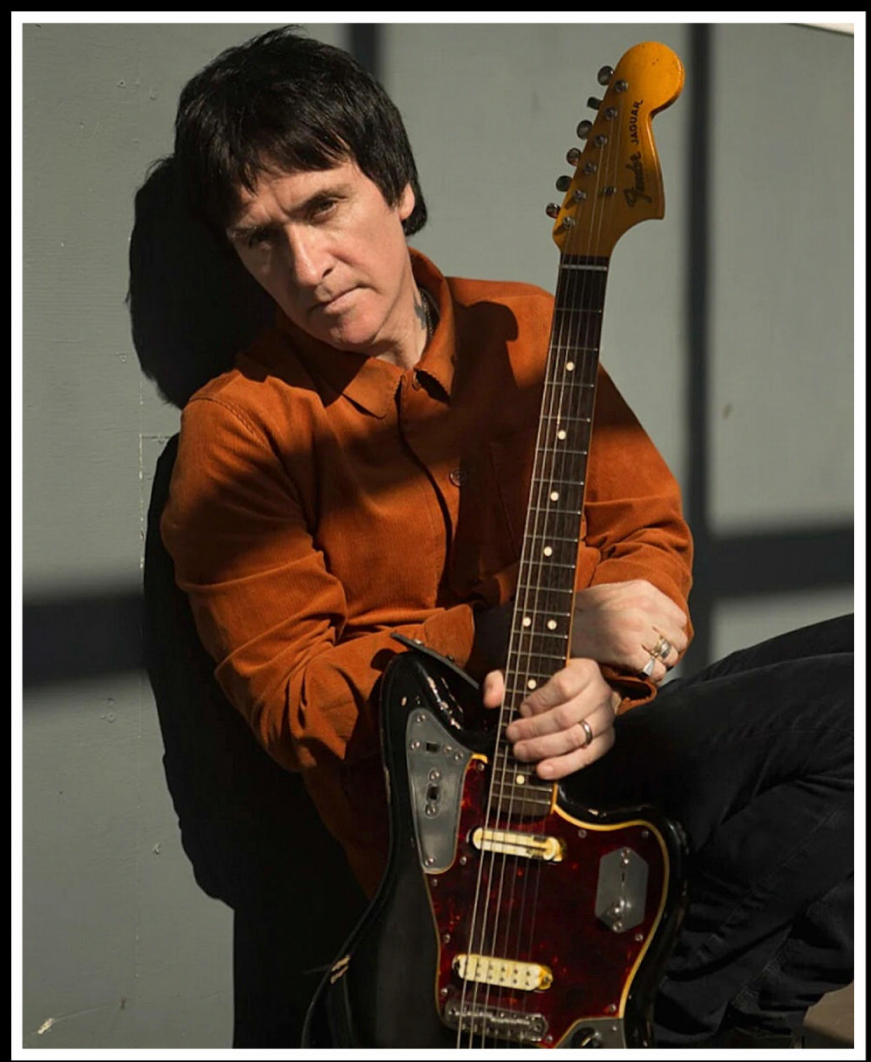
mentioning bits of it sound like stuff I did in Electronic, stuff I did in The The, stuff I did in The Smiths. And I realise that's not only because of the 90s electro sounds. It just didn't occur to me that some people might think, 'he's quoting himself,' or, 'he's being self-referential.' I had to answer that with: It's my sound; I f*cking invented it. I can use it as many times as I like!

Where in other people's music do you hear your influence?

I suppose you hear echoes of what I've done in what got called dreampop several years ago – but with other people's own twist on it. Just when you think it's been done to death, a new generation runs with their own imaginations. Which is very gratifying and very flattering to me. When I was asked to do The Avalanches collaboration a few years ago [*The Divine Chord* from 2020's *We Will Always Love You*], they sent me the track and I almost thought, 'I should do someone trying to do me.' That was a bit of a first. When they sent me the track, I could hear what they were going for. It was like, 'I see, you want a kind of dreampop thing here.' But I'd rather do that than just me doing a version of me.

How would you define that sound?

The thing we're talking about here is a clear ringing sound that is modulated and quite dreamy. When I hear it, I just think I'm listening to like-minded souls, really. I don't think I'm hearing people who are copying me. I think they probably would have done it anyway. The stuff I've done may have inspired their imagination, but everyone's approach is a sensibility. If you're playing with the sort of sound I use, I think it's a sensibility and it is kind of a statement. I still think that sound is trying to be out of the box a little bit and fighting against anything that is too kind of gnarly. In my case it was trying to be heady, in a way. I don't see it as being particularly polite though. Something like [The Smiths'] *The Headmaster Ritual* or *The Messenger* are quite neo-psychedelic, if I was going to put a word on it. To me, it's heavier than someone who thinks they're trying to do Led Zeppelin. And it's more interesting. The guitar really helps you stamp your own identity – on your band and ultimately on the world, or at least anyone who's listening anyway. I love that about the guitar. You obviously have to get past the initial bit of finding your vocabulary and being adept, but that thing I'm known for with my sound was fairy deliberate. That's one of the great things about the instrument – you are expressing yourself and you are taking a position.



SINGLE-MINDED
"When I'm writing songs, everything in my life comes secondary to that," Johnny says

What artists influenced your approach to guitar tone early on?

My approach to sound had been on my mind quite a lot. When I left school, there was a new movement of people who were thinking along the same lines. But they were all a little older than me – people like Will Sergeant [Echo & The Bunnymen] and Robert Smith [The Cure]. People often overlook what Robert Smith was doing on guitar. The fact that he joined Siouxsie And The Banshees was really f*cking cool. Keith Levene [Public Image Ltd] and John McGeoch, too. In our own little ways we were all thinking along the same lines which is anti-rock. But we also wanted to bring a certain kind of mystery and, dare I say, an underground kind of 'drugginess' to it. In other words, it wasn't about being pretty and polite just because you were playing clean. Listen to *Charlotte Sometimes* by The Cure and what Robert was doing on that. I went to see a lot of these bands when I was a kid and I have to give credit to the times. It rubs off on you. We were all young, and it all added up to this feeling of futurism. The main proponent of it who had kicked that off in the UK was Bill Nelson with Be Bop Deluxe, and his first couple of solo records with Red Noise. Bill Nelson was very respected. Be Bop Deluxe were pre-punk – around 1974/75. I saw Be Bop Deluxe a couple of times and he was great because he was doing flash stuff on guitar that all teenage boys like, but his songwriting and approach was not hoary old blues rock; he was doing this kind of glam art-rock thing.

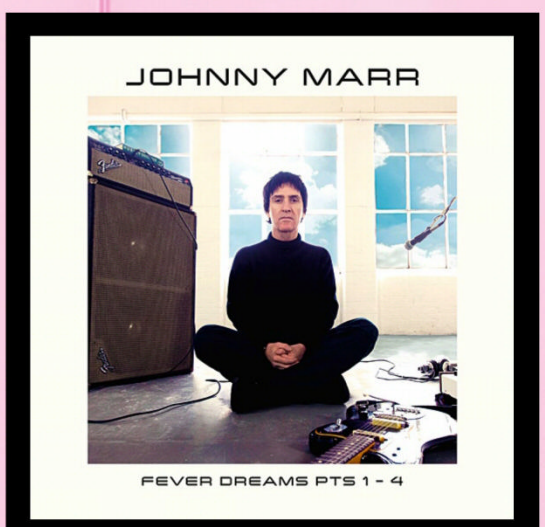
In more recent times you discovered an affinity with the American indie scene...

I'd gone off British rock music because I felt that a lot of it from the late 90s was starting to sound like a lame imitation of OK Computer. A lot of the things I liked on the guitar were coming out of America. Broken Social Scene's first album [*Feel Good Lost*] restored my faith in what guitar bands can do. When I started to explore that American scene a bit more, I realised all roads led to Modest Mouse. But I couldn't work out what their influences were. And I found that really refreshing. I just knew I liked it. We really hit the ground running and got on a very creative streak. I fell back into my experience of being a teenager when the chemistry is really good. The Cribs happened like Modest Mouse happened in that we initially got together to do something short and temporary. When it comes to me joining bands it's really a matter of having been through such an intense experience with other people making music that it would just be plain f*cking rude to bail. When I'm writing songs at a rapid rate and having a great time in a creative situation, everything in my life comes secondary to that. I just get completely focused and single-minded. To get serious for a minute: I'm not really sure how great that is for you as a human being. But that's the way I've been since I was a kid. And that's what I've had to do to make this double album.

So you're still as single-minded as you've always been?

Yeah. It's not just my name, but it's the next chapter in my life and I know I'm going to be judged on it and it's got to sustain me and my band for the next couple of years. I know this all sounds very serious. But I don't know any other way.

"MY SMITHS 1980S RED LES PAUL HAS BEEN ON MORE RECORDS THAN ANY OTHER GUITAR"



Johnny Marr's new double album *Fever Dreams Pts 1-4* is out now. Johnny will perform live at the BBC Radio 6 Music Festival in Cardiff 1st – 3rd April, before a UK arena tour with Blondie beginning 22nd April at Glasgow's SSE Hydro.

Words Jenna Scaramanga

"HE WAS AHEAD OF HIS TIME"

How Johnny Marr blazed his own trail, by Dave Keuning of **The Killers**

There's a handful of players out there that have carved out their own style and flavour, and Johnny Marr is definitely one of those. He and The Edge were the most interesting guitarists from that 80s era with what they're playing, and they both had a great band. For sure they did something worth noticing, instead of a slew of guitar players just doing rock chords or whatever. It's hard for me to know exactly how much each one of my influences has influenced me, but Johnny Marr, Robert Smith, Billy Corgan and Angus Young are all part of the recipe of who I am. They pop their head out at different moments.

I've been listening to The Smiths recently while I've been working on stuff with The Killers. When we're writing, I try and I go back to the old influences because there's still plenty more stuff I can do. I haven't sat down and learned every Smiths song. I've only learned a handful of them, so there's always something more to discover.

A lot of people try to say the coolest answer to why they picked up a guitar as a kid, but when I started I wanted to play songs that were fun – and what was fun on guitar was AC/DC, Mötley Crüe, Guns N' Roses. There are Smiths songs like *This Charming Man* that are fun to play too, but with Johnny Marr some of the songs aren't entry level guitar, so it had to come later. There were some Smiths songs I grew up listening to, but I got more into the band in the late 90s, when I was looking for more music post-Kurt Cobain. The Cure, New Order and The Smiths – those are probably the three biggest [bands] I was listening to in the early Killers days. We talked about countless Smiths songs.

I like a certain sound that's clean but tough. I like my voicings to be heard. And that's what's beautiful about some of Johnny's stuff, like *Back To The Old House* – there's these cool voicings that if it was full of gain you wouldn't really hear. It sounds geeky, but as a guitar player I really enjoy new voicings. If I'm practising on something like The Smiths or The Beatles, from time to time I'll still stumble onto a new chord voicing after all these years. It's cool because to my ears each one evokes a certain emotion, a certain flavour that's unique to it. You've got to appreciate all the different chords to really understand that. I like it when there's a song full of seventh chords and you hear the voicings, and you've got to have the right sound for that. When Johnny has chorus on it, it sounds even more beautiful.

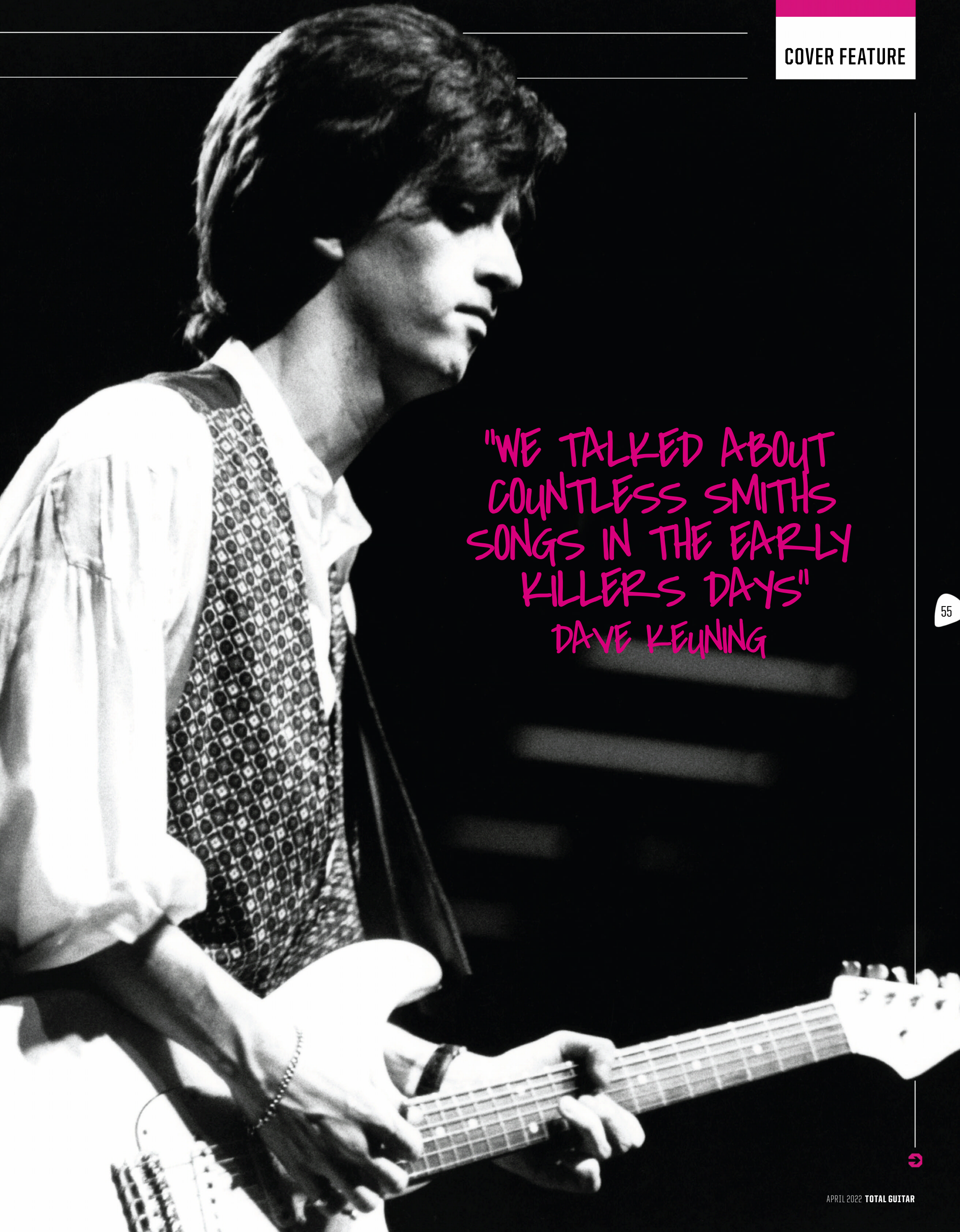
I like the sound right down the middle. That's why I like the Fender Hot Rod Deville. I want to take a different approach with every song, and Johnny has definitely has been an influence on that. You don't have to be dirty. You can let your chords speak for themselves. But Johnny has got plenty of dirty songs too. *London* has got heavy guitar. There's a time and place for it.

There's a certain jazziness to some of Johnny's stuff – and I don't like jazz – but like a willingness to play different jazz chords and great clean, pretty parts. I always liked The Smiths' song *Please Please Please Let Me Get What I Want*. There's just a lot of beautiful chords in it that evoke emotion, a lot of major seventh chords. That stuck with me. Johnny also has a lot of dirty, great single lines too. He was ahead of his time just playing all this single line, angular stuff.

I think of Johnny sometimes when I write a pretty acoustic song with cool voicings. I usually think, 'Oh, is that too much like some of that Smiths stuff?' But no, I usually just go with it. I'm probably influenced more by his guitar playing, but I wish the songwriting would be the bigger influence. He throws in a lot of sudden out-of-key chord movements. He's out of key just for a second on a couple chords, but it's all really cool. I wish I would do a little more of that. Not to mention the quality of his songs is really good as well, so I might have to learn a few more and try and let those influences sink in!

It was an honour to see Johnny play *Mr. Brightside* with The Killers at Glastonbury 2019 [Dave did not perform with the band]. It's pretty cool that I've learned a few of his songs and then he had to learn one of my songs. He played the riff a little differently from me. If he wants to do a different interpretation, I think it's great.

Photos Inset: Hajo Mueller; Main: Getty



"WE TALKED ABOUT COUNTLESS SMITHS SONGS IN THE EARLY KILLERS DAYS"

DAVE KEUNING

Words Grant Moon

"A NEW KIND OF GUITAR HERO"

How Johnny Marr re-articulated the guitar for a whole generation, by the Manic Street Preachers' **James Dean Bradfield**.

The Smiths really kicked in with me in 1984 with *Hatful Of Hollow*, which is still a lot of people's favourite Smiths album. They hadn't become a massive band at that point, hadn't had millions of hits, so they put this sort of strange compilation out full of sessions and one-off singles, and it's brilliant.

This Charming Man is what really switched me on to them. It was so offensive, but so erudite and articulate – I absolutely loved it as soon as I heard the intro. Morrissey was choosing different notes, words and phrases to everybody else. Mike Joyce's drums were sensitive and beautiful, and I hadn't heard bass playing like Andy Rourke's since [The Jam's] Bruce Foxton. And Johnny Marr was right in the centre of it. They were a so-called 'indie band', but if you listen to them The Smiths were – in the best possible way – a muso band. Everybody in that band was at the top of their game.

Then everybody recognises Marr as being a new kind of guitar hero, and Marr and Morrissey are immediately seen as the successors to Jagger and Richards, Lennon and McCartney, and they live up to that over a very short period of time. I think Johnny's a massive pop fan, which gave Morrissey so much to get hold of and work with. Morrissey realised, 'I've got this amazing pop writer here, and I've got to sing stuff that's even better than the guitar lines'. And that's the battle, the tension, the competitiveness – that's what made the songs so good.

Like Jimmy Page, Johnny's a master in the studio, a brilliant 'overdub' guitarist. He knows exactly how to layer guitars in and out of the song, exactly what to put on the left speaker then switch to the right. He's an orchestrator. On songs like *Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now* he's orchestrating the entire backdrop of the song so it was much fuller, much more lush and melodramatic. I think he's trying to imagine other musical ideas, other musical instruments, through his guitar – when you get to, say, *How Soon Is Now* or *The Graize Train* [B-side to the single *Panic*] you can definitely hear it.

Johnny would sometimes use a vintage 80s Roland Jazz Chorus amp. I've got one, and there's a quite abrasive top end to it, but if you bear that in mind when you record and roll that off, it's a really sympathetic amp towards players. If you've got the song ordered in your head, a Jazz Chorus makes you sound brilliant. And listening to Johnny's stuff, you can tell how precisely the song is ordered in his head. He's tracking himself so much sometimes, and for that to be successful – to replicate something so finely – you've got know what you're going to do.

A lot of guitarists stick with their signature guitar because it becomes part of their identity, and while he was this anointed new guitar hero, Johnny didn't. Early on he went from the Rickenbacker to the [Gibson ES-]335, then at the start of *The Queen Is Dead* album [1986] he was using the Les Paul. Later when he was with Electronic he was using a Strat a lot. He just went travelling into the guitar world, wantonly using them all!

I've never met Johnny but saw him in passing once. He said hello out of a car window, promised he'd get me a discount on his signature Fender Jaguar, but never came through for me! He obviously always had a couple of really good acoustics, because whenever he tracked his acoustic onto his electrics it sounded amazing. Like *Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now* and *William, It Was Really Nothing* – that's just an electric and acoustic beautifully tracked together to create that tender, squishy guitar sound.

When you watch him live you do think, 'So how is he going to replicate all that?' And even though it's not as full, he always gives a good representation of what he's done on the record. It just shows his skill. He so articulate musically, his instincts are amazing. And you can tell he's a true great because even now, because he keeps his guitar low! That's an achievement because, as we know, as you get older those joints become less supple, and it's a bit more painful keeping the guitar low. But he always did.

I remember trying to learn stuff like *Still Ill* and *Girl Afraid* when I was young, and playing *This Charming Man* for a TV crew and stumbling over three times – the b*stards still used it! *The Headmaster Ritual* took me a while to learn. It's quite atonal, nearly dissonant, but they make a brilliant song out of it.

There are little Johnny Marr echoes in our own music, too. *A Boy From The Plantation* from [2020 solo album] *Even In Exile* has a little *There Is A Light That*

Photo Getty

"JOHNNY'S A MASTER IN THE STUDIO – LIKE JIMMY PAGE"

JAMES DEAN BRADFIELD

Never Goes Out to it. On the Manics' last album [*The Ultra Vivid Lament*] the song *Snowing In Sapporo* wasn't working until Nicky [Wire, bassist] suggested we try strumming sixteenths on the acoustic so it's like a tambourine, like on *Bigmouth Strikes Again*, and that unlocked the whole song. On *Cardiff Afterlife* [from the Manics' 2004 LP *Lifeblood*], you can just hear the Marr/Smiths influence all the way through.

Johnny's on The The's *Mind Bomb* album [1989] and I especially loved *The Beat(en) Generation* on that – some of the notes he chose on that were a highpoint for me in terms of his collaborations. He found a perfect partner there in [The The linchpin] Matt Johnson. I thought that was that was a pretty good 'second marriage'…

As a musician, Johnny taught me that there's more to the chord than I realised. I'd look at his chords, and the way he'd drop the fifth in there, do inversions and little hammer-ons, drop in a sustaining note, move the chord around the fretboard while having something dissonant in there. I loved players like [Sex Pistols'] Steve Jones, but Johnny took me on a bit further, made me realise there's a whole separate subplot going on in just one chord. He taught me a new vocabulary.

When he came along the guitar had become something associated with vainglorious, heroic mountain-top actions – which is great, I love Slash and a big riff! – but sometimes you need to re-animate and re-articulate the instrument, and Johnny Marr's legacy is that he re-articulated the guitar for a whole generation.

"HE'S VERY UNORTHODOX"

How the Red Hot Chili Peppers' guitarist **John Frusciante** found a kindred spirit in Johnny Marr...

Words Jenna Scaramanga, Michael Astley-Brown

When John Frusciante made his 2009 solo record *The Empyrean*, he invited Johnny Marr to play on several tracks. From there, a deep connection was formed between the two musicians.

"It was really fun," John recalls. "I got to see how Johnny's creative process worked on the guitar. He's very unorthodox: in The Smiths' stuff, the guitar is often a thing blending in with the band, but when you actually see the way Johnny comes up with things, and the way he thinks through the instrument, it's just totally unconventional. And it was amazing to see that creative process at work fitting into the context of a pre-recorded piece of music.

"Johnny is an extremely nice person as well: mild-mannered, no ego there or anything like that. When we were doing the mix of that album, it wasn't like normal, when you write down what's on each track on the sticker that you put on the mixing console – you write rhythm guitar, lead guitar, whatever it is. But with him, it's just Johnny Marr! It's like a synthesizer or a sound effect or something. It doesn't function in the mix in the way that a guitar usually does. It's its own little universe coming out of that one track. It was really exciting to see it from that perspective. It just doesn't fit into the mix in any kind of traditional way. You've just got to look at it as its own rule."

Repaying the compliment, Johnny says: "Without being overly simplistic or corny, guitar players are definitely a breed, and John and I hit it off straight away. There is this obsessive thing with guitar players – whether it's about sound or scales or models of guitar, it just seems to be part of the package.

"John and I were recording in his house, which was nice. And with him, there was a quiet sort of intensity. There's an almost zen-like stillness about his focus when he's writing. There's this underlying honour in what he's doing. John has an approach to music which is almost sacred."

TWO OF A KIND Johnny and (inset) his friend John

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PLAY LIKE JOHNNY MARR

Get a little jangle in your sound with our breakdown of Johnny's style

Guitars and backing Jon Bishop

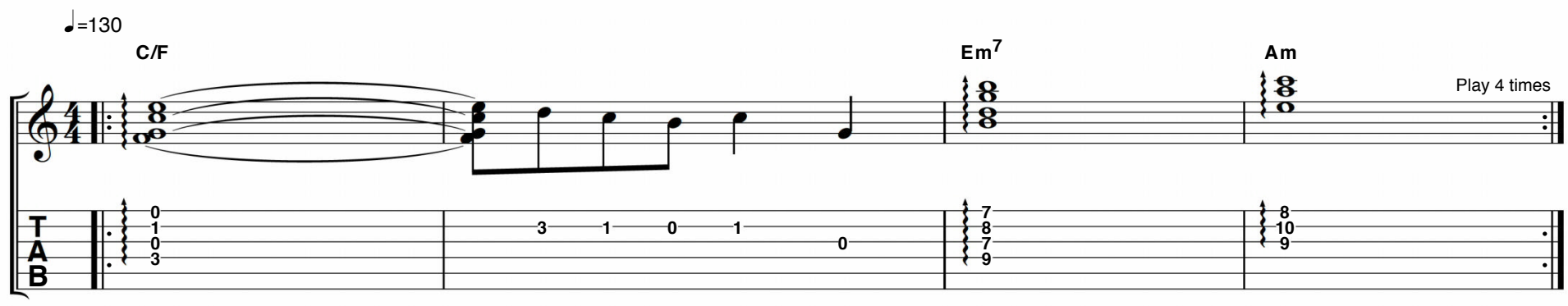
He's the Smiths guitar wizard who inspired a legion of indie guitarists to experiment with jangly tones. And, from the Madchester scene and 90s Britpop to later acts like The Killers, The Decemberists and The Drums, Johnny Marr's influence is truly lasting. Notably, he's created his legacy without languishing in one band for four decades – Marr's influence comes from the breadth of his career's work with acts such as The The, Electronic, Modest Mouse, The Cribs, and in more recent years as a solo artist.

Here, we're looking at some key elements of Johnny's playing style; parts of his playing that were at the core of the sound of The Smiths in the 80s, right up to today's solo work. Our tab examples showcase some of the technical and compositional approaches Johnny has used over the years.

Work through at your own pace and appreciate the magic...

1 SOPHISTICATED CHORDS: SLASH CHORDS

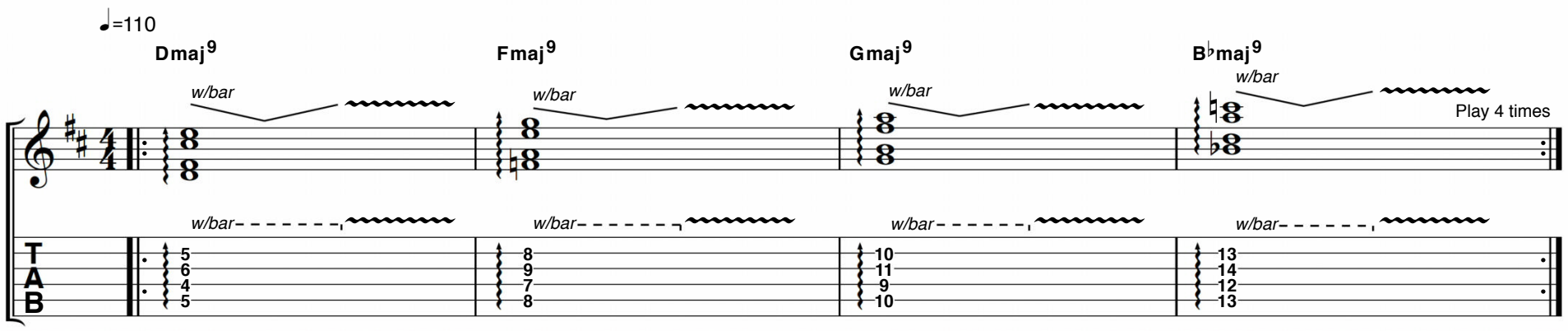
BIT.LY/TG356AUDIO



Johnny Marr is a fan of using rich sounding chords in his arrangements, such as the C/F slash chord here – it's a C major chord over an F bass note. F doesn't appear in the C chord (the notes are C, E and G), so you can be sure you're adding colour to the sound of the basic chord. To record our part we used a 12-string electric guitar, inspired by Johnny's use of the Rickenbacker 360-12.

2 SOPHISTICATED CHORDS: EXTENDED MAJOR CHORDS

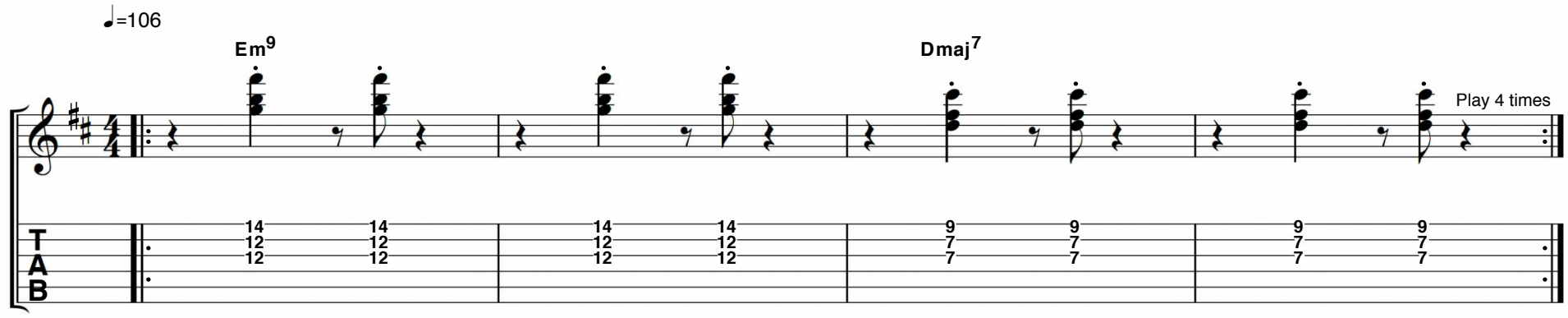
BIT.LY/TG356AUDIO



This example showcases a great way to play the major 9 chord sound, but listen out too for those dips on the tremolo arm, which are key to the sound. We used a trem-quipped Gretsch but Johnny is better known for his Bigsby-loaded Gibson ES-355, which featured on tracks such as The Smiths' *Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now*.

3 SOPHISTICATED CHORDS: MAJOR 7THS & MINOR 9THS

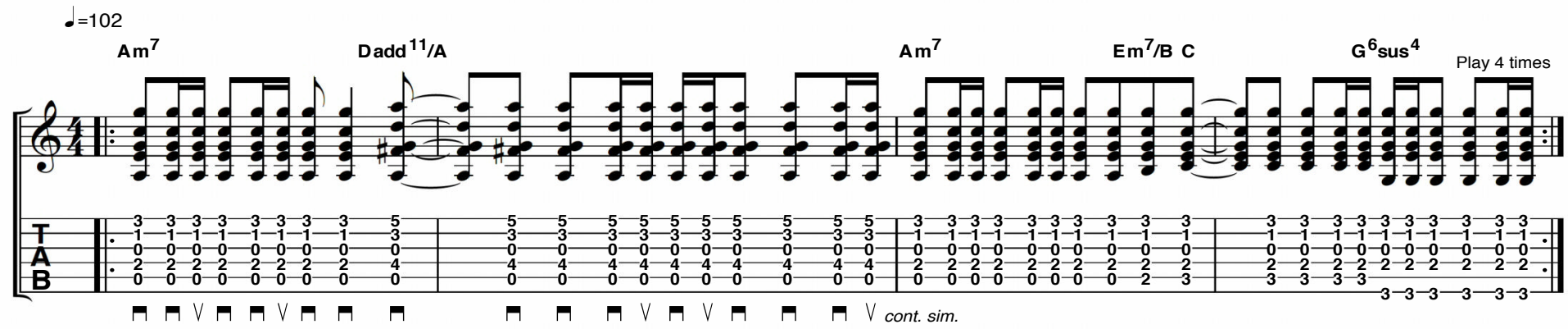
BIT.LY/TG356AUDIO



Here we're using one chord shape in two different contexts. Firstly we play the shape at the 12th fret with the bass guitar playing an E note, creating an Em9. Then the shape is played at the 7th fret over a D bass note to give a Dmaj7 sound. It's a trick Johnny used in The Smiths' *I Don't Owe You Anything*.

4 ACOUSTIC STRUMMING

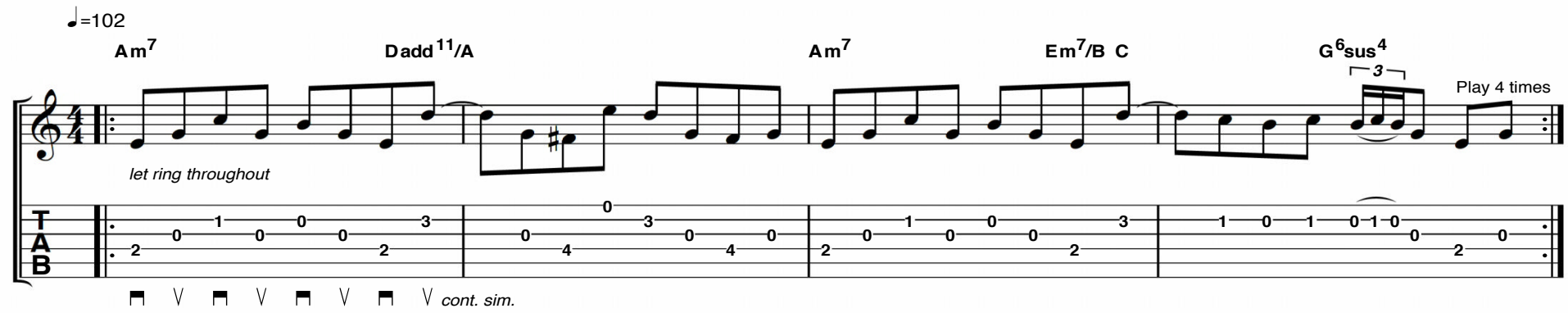
BIT.LY/TG356AUDIO



Johnny has a great rhythmic sense, and songs like *Bigmouth Strikes Again* by The Smiths or *Hi Hello* from Marr's *Call The Comet* 2018 solo album feature strummed acoustic parts. The galloping rhythm here features on many The Smiths songs; the open strings help create continuity between the chords and add to the ringing jangle.

5 2ND FRET CAPO

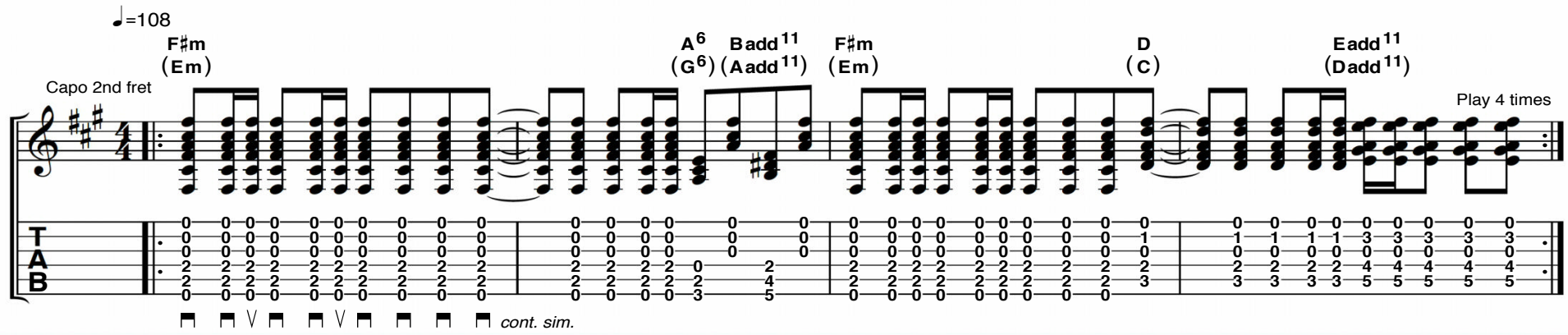
BIT.LY/TG356AUDIO



In this example, we add a simple electric guitar line over our strummed acoustic example – similar to Marr's work on The Smiths' *Back To The Old House* or *This Tension* from his 2014 *Playland* solo album. Use alternate picking and make sure the strings ring out constantly.

6 2ND FRET CAPO

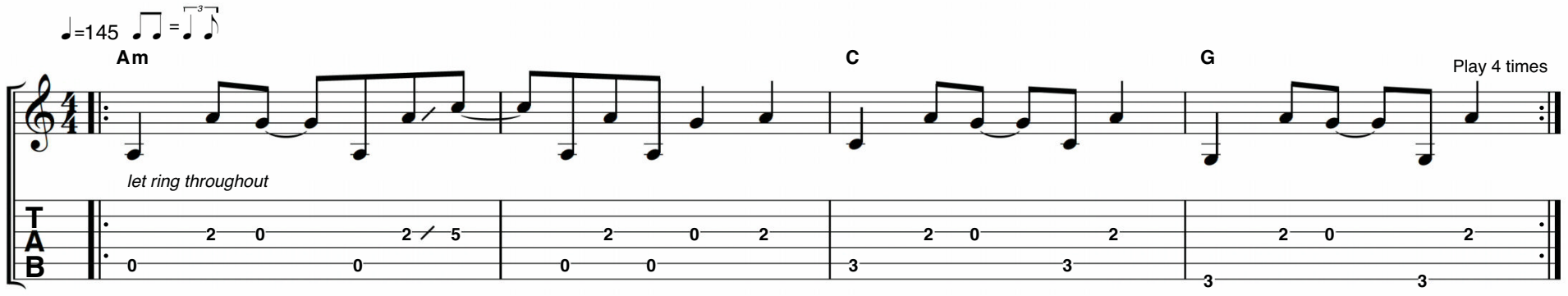
BIT.LY/TG356AUDIO



In some recording sessions with The Smiths, Marr would tune his guitar up by a tone to F♯ standard tuning (F♯ B E A C♯ F♯). Obviously a capo at the 2nd fret is the more practical choice for the sake of experimenting. Our example is inspired by 2nd-fret capo songs like *Barbarism Begins At Home* and *This Night Has Opened My Eyes*.

7 FUZZY TONES

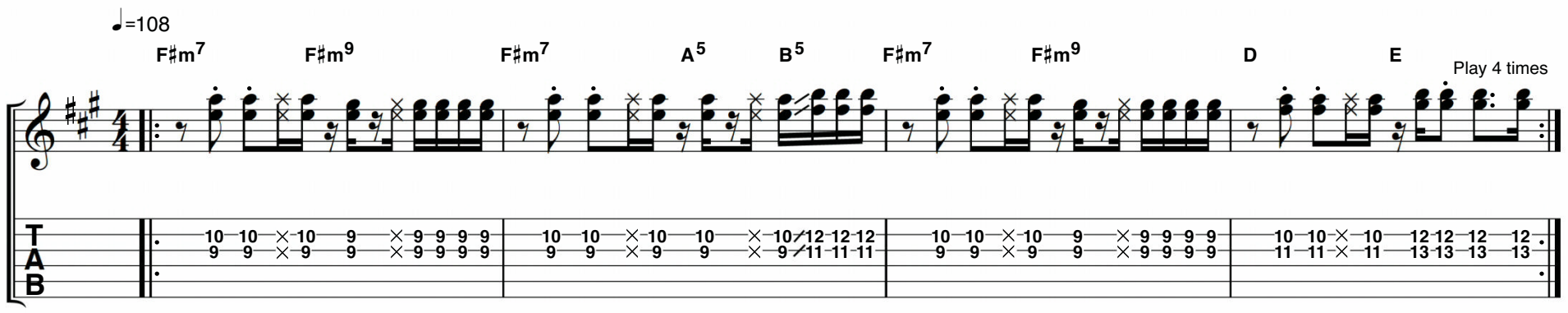
BIT.LY/TG356AUDIO



There are several The Smiths songs such as *What Difference Does It Make* and *Sheila Take A Bow* that feature fuzz distortion tones, in addition to more recent songs like *Tenement Time*. Our example has a shuffle feel, so all of the eighth notes are slightly swung. The open strings provide sustain, ringing out to provide a denser texture.

8 FUNKY PARTIAL CHORDS

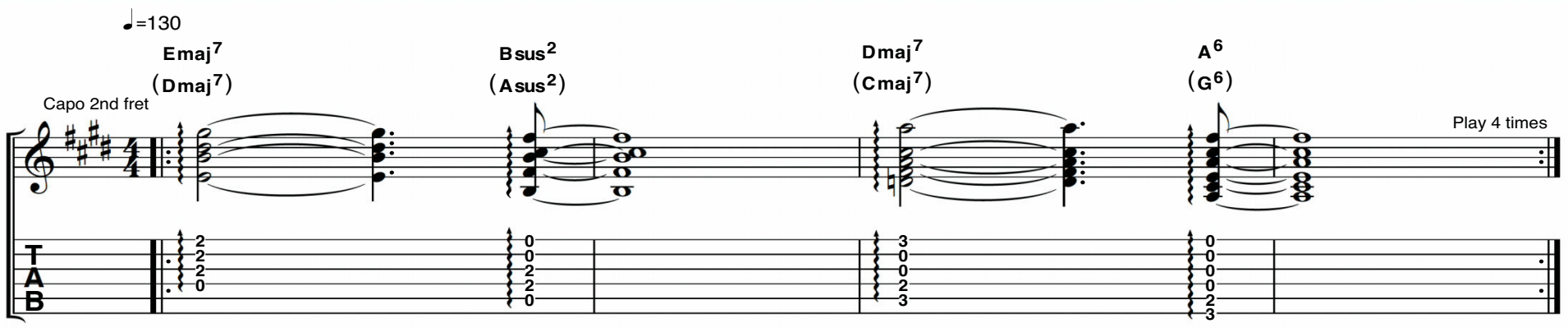
BIT.LY/TG356AUDIO



For this example, we're embellishing the acoustic guitar foundation we laid down in Example 6. Johnny's two-note chord approach can be heard on Smiths tracks such as *This Charming Man* and *Meat Is Murder*. The main consideration here is to maintain the muting of the open strings with your idle fretting fingers.

9 LAYERING PARTS 1: JANGLE CHORDS

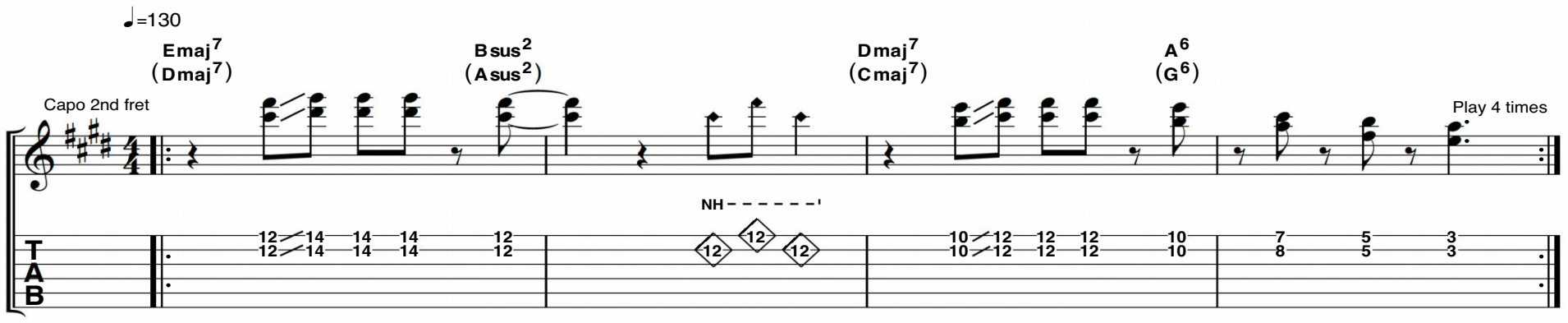
BIT.LY/TG356AUDIO



Marr is known for his multi-tracked soundscapes with layered guitar parts. For our example we started by double-tracking an acoustic guitar part with a 2nd-fret capo. The next layer is notated here and consists of simple spread chords played on a 12-string electric guitar with a capo on the 2nd fret. The idea is to add to the track, but still leave enough space for the next layer.

10 LAYERING PARTS 2: DOUBLESTOPS AND HARMONICS

BIT.LY/TG356AUDIO



Inspired by *Cemetry Gates* and *This Charming Man*, we're adding another layer to the previous part here with a simple motif using doublestops and natural harmonics.

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JOHNNY MARR
SONG-SMITH

Learn three classic riffs from the band that made Johnny Marr an indie guitar icon in the 80s

Video Jamie Hunt

Johnny Marr is of course best known for his work with influential indie giants The Smiths, who released their entire four-album catalogue in an all-too-brief four years before the band split. They would enjoy great success, with 14 single releases topping the UK indie charts between 1983 and 1987.

Here, we're looking at three of our favourite Smiths guitar riffs. Together, they exemplify Marr's rhythm style, with an emphasis on partial chords and arpeggios – perhaps the most important part of his early sound. Make sure to take a look at our video lessons where we've broken the riffs down for you note by note. Note that we've advised you to use a capo for convenience. For some tracks however, Marr himself had guitars set up in a higher tuning, two semitones up, to give: F# B E A C# F#. Make sure to use lighter gauge strings if you take this approach.

1 THIS CHARMING MAN

Appears at: 0:00-0:13
Tempo: 208 bpm
Key/scale: G major
Capo: 2nd fret

Surely one of the most iconic guitar lines Marr recorded with The Smiths, *This Charming Man*'s opening riff is built around three phrases. The opening section is based on two-string diads on the second and third strings. Keep your second finger planted on the third string while alternating between your third and first fingers on the second string. The second section builds melodies around an E minor triad at the 7th, 8th and 9th frets of the first, second and third strings. The phrasing gets a little tricky as Johnny repeats the odd note and drops in the open E string mid-sequence. Take your time to get the exact order of notes, as you'll need this phrase to resolve before moving into the sliding diads that follow. The closing sequence returns to the two-string diads from the opening section. Marr uses open string notes to add interest and depth to his phrases, so take note of where they are dotted throughout this riff, as they bring further charm to the melody.

2 HEAVEN KNOWS I'M MISERABLE NOW

Appears at: 0:00-0:18
Tempo: 114 bpm
Key/scale: E major
Capo: 2nd fret

Another legendary Smiths guitar line, here Johnny opens with jazzy-sounding major and minor 7th chords before moving to a triad played against open strings. Start by getting familiar with the Emaj7 chord (it's the first chord you'll see in the video). The Cmaj7 is the same shape, just played four frets lower. Look ahead to the fretboard jump, so you can land the chord change smoothly and accurately. The second section of the riff features an A triad shape played at the 7th, 6th and 5th frets of the fourth, third and second strings, plus open fifth and first strings. As he strums the pattern Johnny alternates between the open string and the fretted note on the second string before repeating the idea two frets higher. It's a neat idea that takes the triads into extended harmony – and it's something you can experiment with, too.

3 BIGMOUTH STRIKES AGAIN

Appears at: 0:50-1:19
Tempo: 134 bpm
Key/scale: C♯ minor
Capo: 4th fret

This riff relies on C♯ and G♯ notes to sustain against a moving chord sequence. So, you'll need to put a capo at the 4th fret to make these notes available to you. The riff is based around a sequence of Cm7, Dm/C♯, and C♯m chords that loop three times. A variation is added to the final C♯m chord of each cycle. On the fourth phrase, the rhythm stays the same, but the chords change to outline an A major, Bmaj6add11 and Bmaj6. This creates a strong turnaround and enables the entire riff to repeat four times. To keep your strumming patterns flowing, use alternate picking to land the down and upstrokes in the desired places. Also, you'll need to accentuate the open fifth string before playing the first and third chord in the main sequence. This establishes a stronger sense of the C♯ root note and adds context to the chords within the progression.

MARR-VELS

Three more of our favourite Marr moments

MODEST MOUSE – DASHBOARD

Appears at: 0:00-0:09

Marr would join US indie rockers Modest Mouse in 2007, recording a full-length album and an EP with them. His offbeat funky rhythm work propels the track along with attitude, making use of Johnny's trademark partial chords.

THE CRIBS – WE SHARE THE SAME SKIES

Appears at: 0:00-0:20

This is classic Marr: a deceptively fiddly arpeggio delivered on his stalwart Fender Jaguar. Based around C♯sus2/E and F♯ chords at the 4th and 2nd frets respectively, you'll need to take care not to fall off the fretboard as you play the open second string and the 4th-fret string bend.

JOHNNY MARR (SOLO) – TENEMENT TIME

Appears at: 0:21-0:35

Set against a backdrop of grinding bass and grungy distorted barre chords, this melodic lead lick from his latest album sees Johnny in harder rock territory than ever before. He demonstrates a gentle fluid vibrato technique, so make sure to give the strings a wobble if you're playing along to the track.

Photography Getty

DEEP PURPLE

SMOKE ON THE WATER

A casino inferno in 1971 would inspire one of the greatest songs in rock history. TG tabs the lot...

In late 1971, Deep Purple's legendary sixth album *Machine Head* was due to be recorded at the Montreux Casino in Switzerland, but when the venue burnt down that December, it forced the band to set up the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio at the closed-for-winter Grand Hotel. With the band squatting in a corridor off the lobby amidst a spaghetti-junction of cables, the conditions were hardly befitting of rock royalty, but guitarist Ritchie Blackmore and co would ultimately blaze through their strongest material to date, including this month's Classic Track inspired by the casino fire itself…

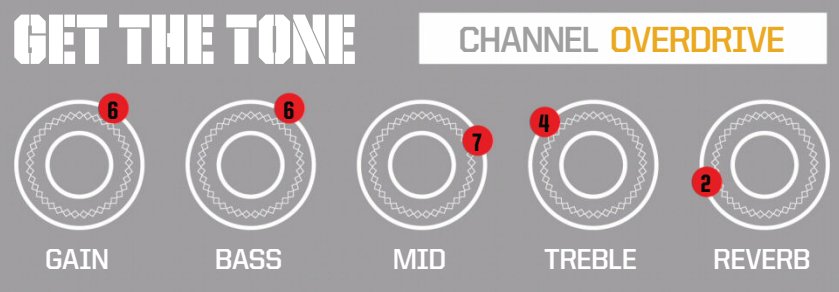
Now a guitar shop mainstay, *Smoke On The Water*'s riff is fabulous for its simplicity, playable by any guitarist, even absolute beginners. The solo is another matter however. Though not Blackmore's most virtuoso offering, there's a sublime feel to the phrasing, particularly the fluidity of his frequent pre-bends. We've tabbed the track in full for you, and, as ever, there's a jam track for you to play along to.

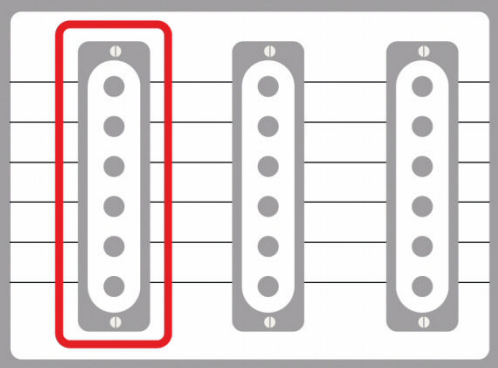
GET THE SOUND

Everything you need to know before playing 'Smoke On The Water'

GET THE TONE

CHANNEL OVERDRIVE



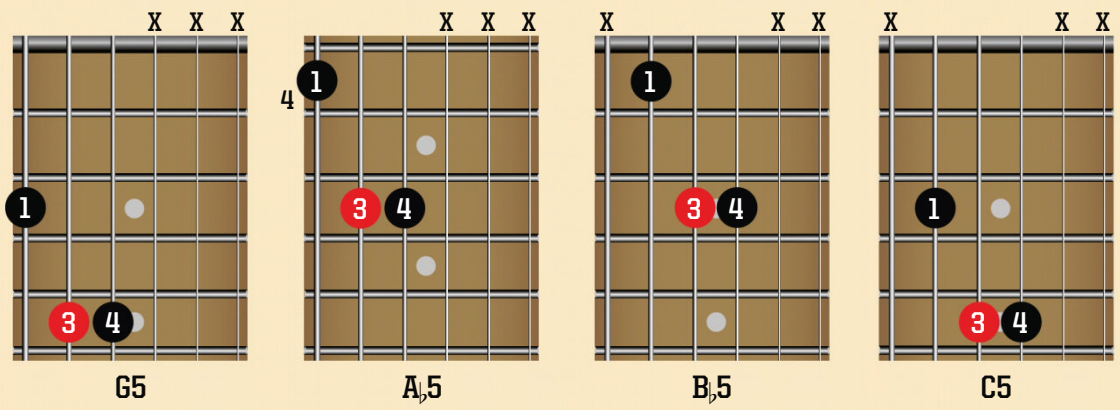


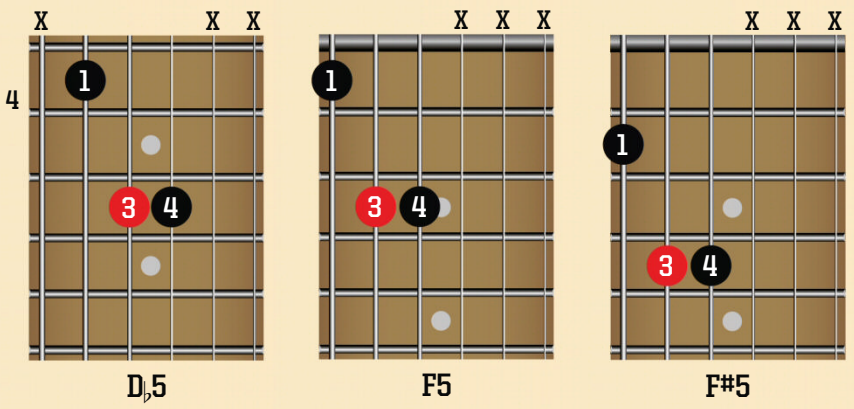
Select a bridge single coil pickup. If your guitar has humbuckers, raise the treble and lower the bass on your amp to compensate.

From 1970 onwards, Blackmore's preference was for a Fender Strat with a scalloped fingerboard, run through Marshall Major 200-watt heads (modified with an extra output stage), spiced up with a treble booster, and played so hard that he even snapped the whammy. His tone on *Smoke On The Water* is surprisingly not as distorted as you might think; Jon Lord's Hammond organ sound actually provides a lot of the weight in the overall sound.

CHORDS

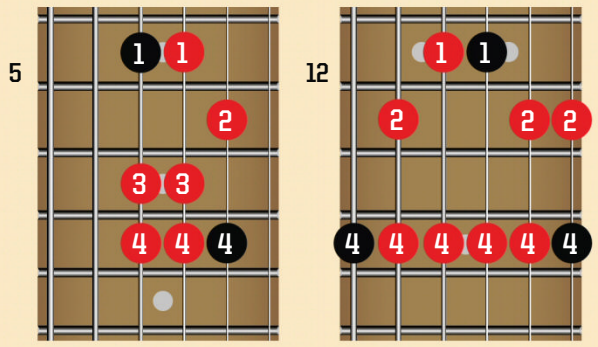
We've laid out the full powerchord shapes here because Ritchie Blackmore uses a mix of full and partial shapes – it's useful to see which full chord shapes the partial shapes are based on. The intro riff uses G5, B♭5, C5 and D♭5 chords, but with the low root notes left out. It's easier to play each intro chord with just one finger, rather than using the full shape. In the verses and choruses make sure to fret the full shapes, even though you'll be playing one note at a time.

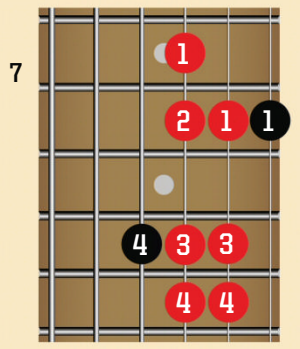




SCALES

Ritchie's solo is a tricky one to pin down in terms of clear scale patterns because he moves through shapes rather than staying in one single pattern. The G natural minor and minor pentatonic scales form the basis though. In bar 7, Ritchie plays a lick that's based on a hybrid of the C blues and Dorian scales. Bar 11 is a similar lick using the same pattern in the 3rd position.





Words Henryyates Guitars and backing SteveAllsworth Photo Getty

DEEP PURPLE
SMOKE ON THE WATER

SMOKE ON THE WATER
Words and Music by Ritchie Blackmore, Ian Gillan, Roger Glover, Jon Lord and Ian Paice
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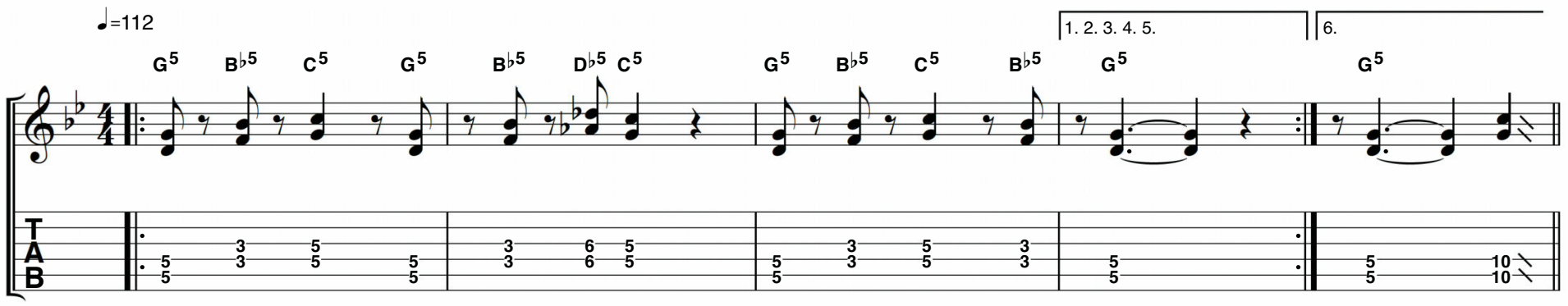
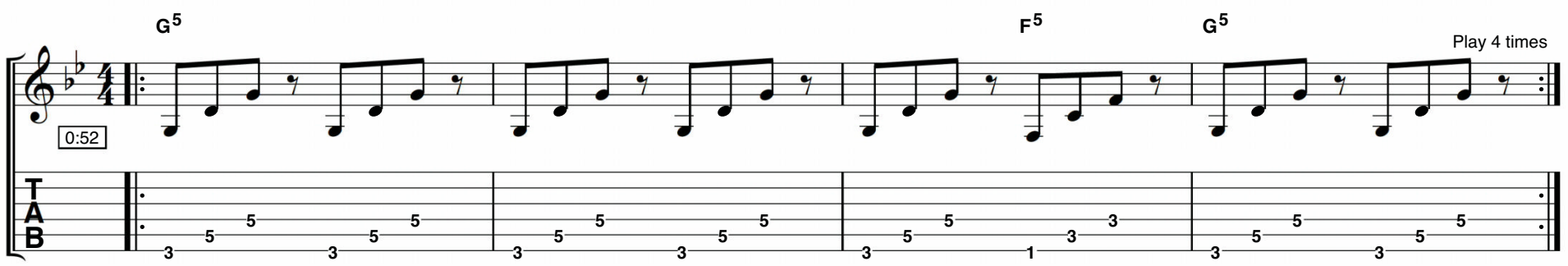
DEEP PURPLE SMOKE ON THE WATER *Intro/Main Riff* **BIT.LY/TG356AUDIO**



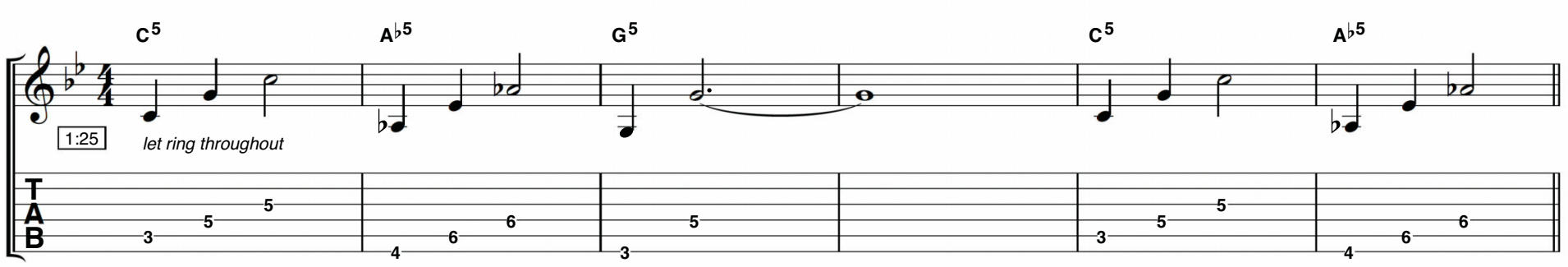
Ritchie Blackmore picks his iconic intro riff with his thumb and index finger (despite using a pick in the verses, choruses and solo) for a more instant attack than a pick can give. It's far from essential, though. Timing is a more important factor, so use a pick if you prefer.

DEEP PURPLE SMOKE ON THE WATER *Verse* **BIT.LY/TG356AUDIO**

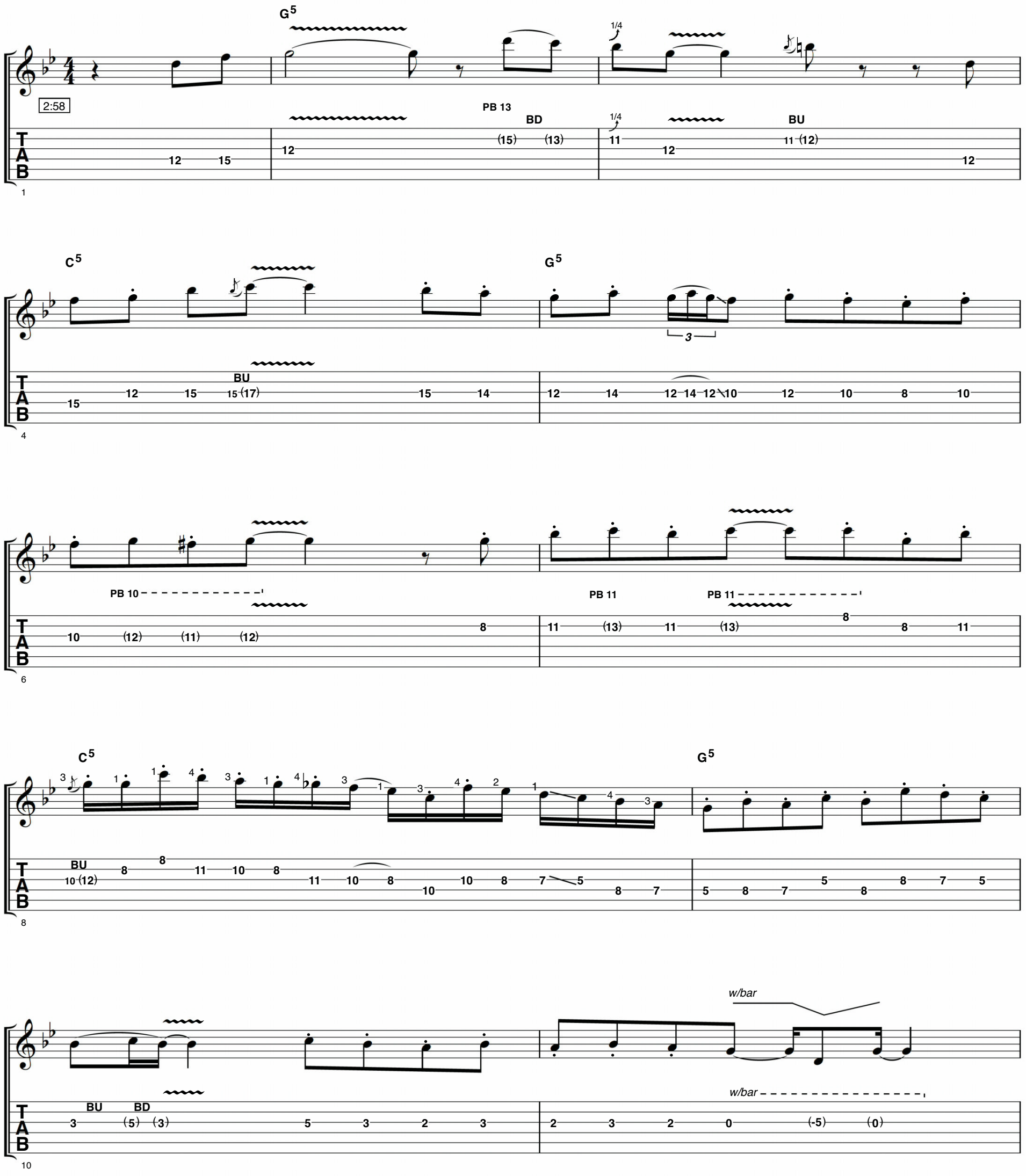
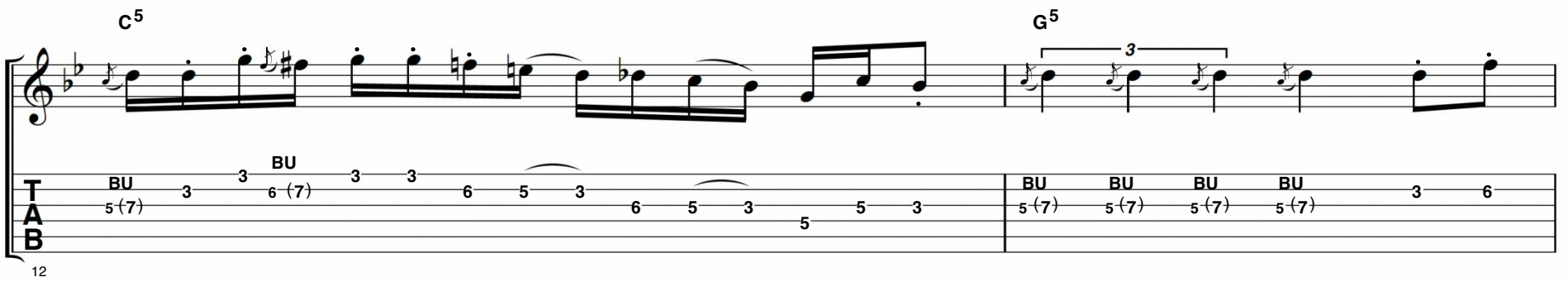


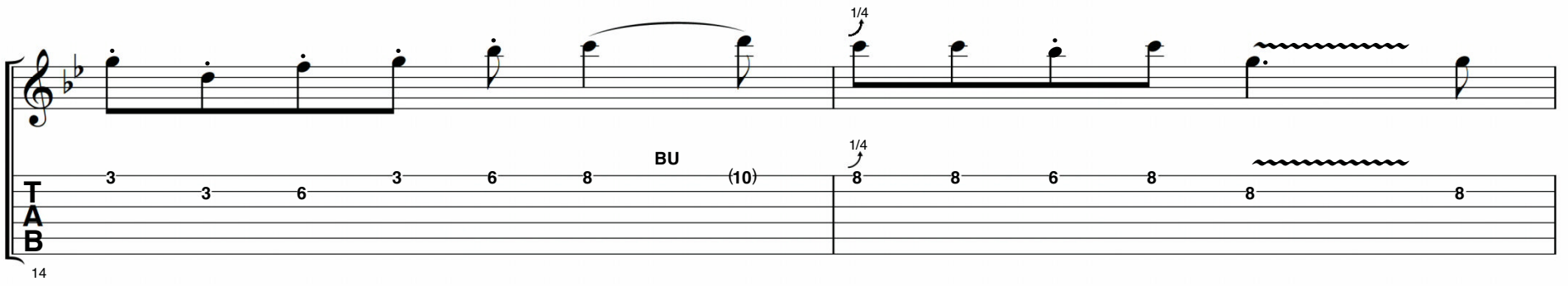
Hold down the first three notes either with your first, third and fourth fingers or by barring across the 5th fret with your third finger. Make sure all the notes are clear and don't ring out over each other. Take note of the rest symbols in the notation and make sure your guitar is silent during these moments.

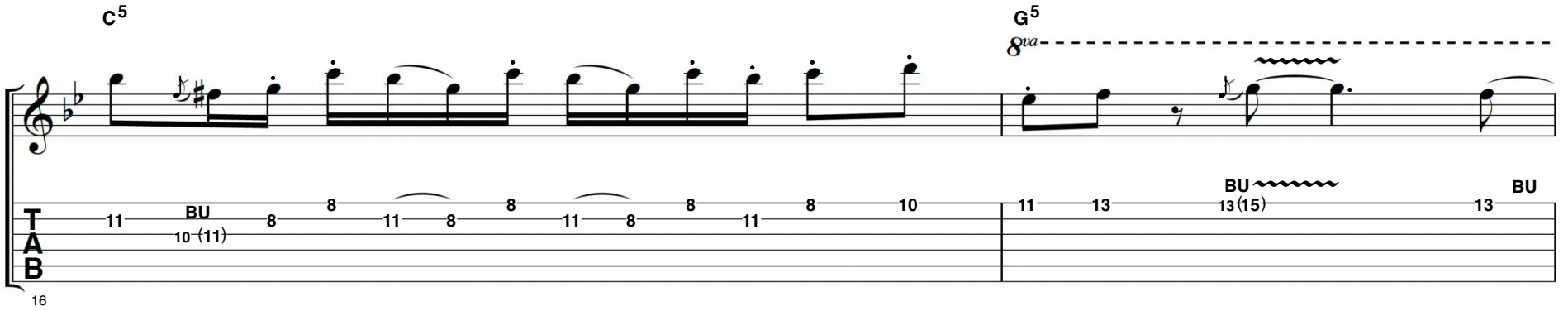
DEEP PURPLE SMOKE ON THE WATER *Chorus* **BIT.LY/TG356AUDIO**

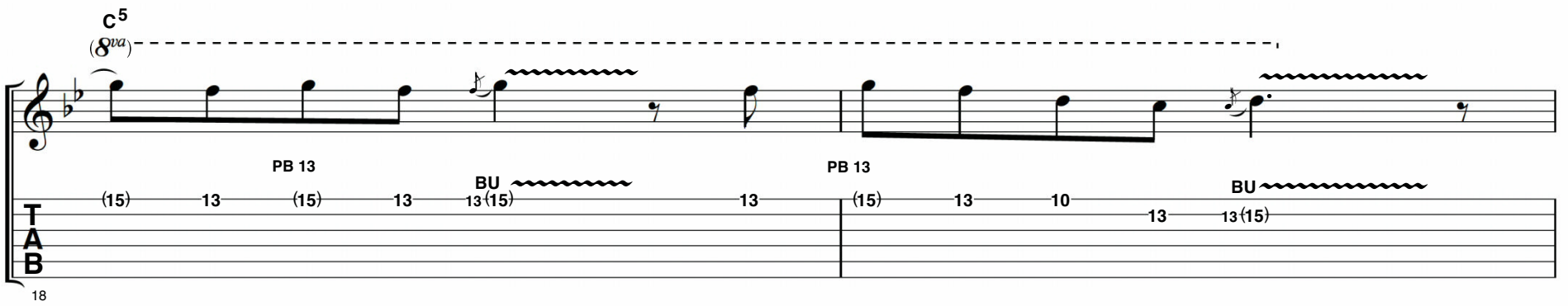


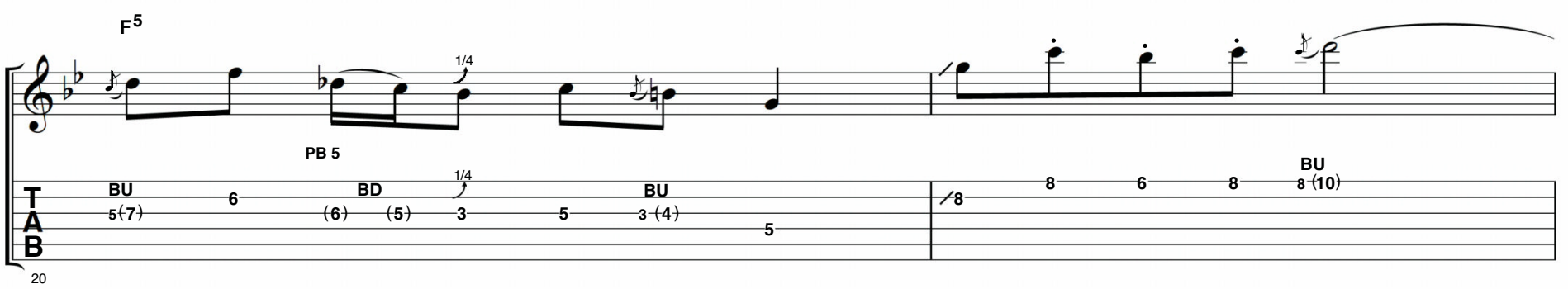
These are basically the same powerchord shapes as used in the verse, just played in different positions on the fretboard. Be careful not to rush; each arpeggio is played at half the speed of the verse. Aim for a fluent, relaxed feel. Repeat the intro, verse, chorus and the intro once more before moving on to play the solo.

DEEP PURPLE SMOKE ON THE WATER Solo **BIT.LY/TG356AUDIO**


C5
G5
3
BU
BU
BU
BU
BU
BU
12

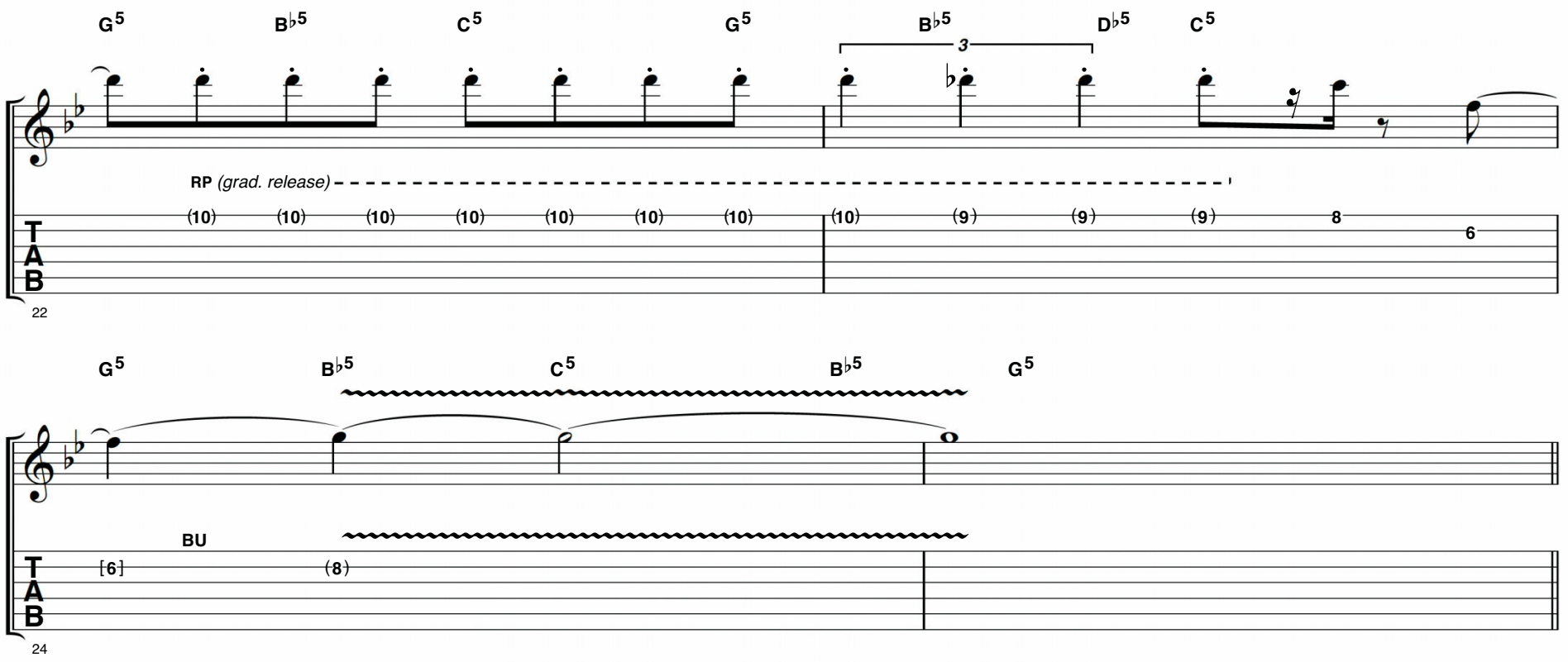

1/4
BU
1/4
14


C5
G5
8va
BU
BU
BU
16

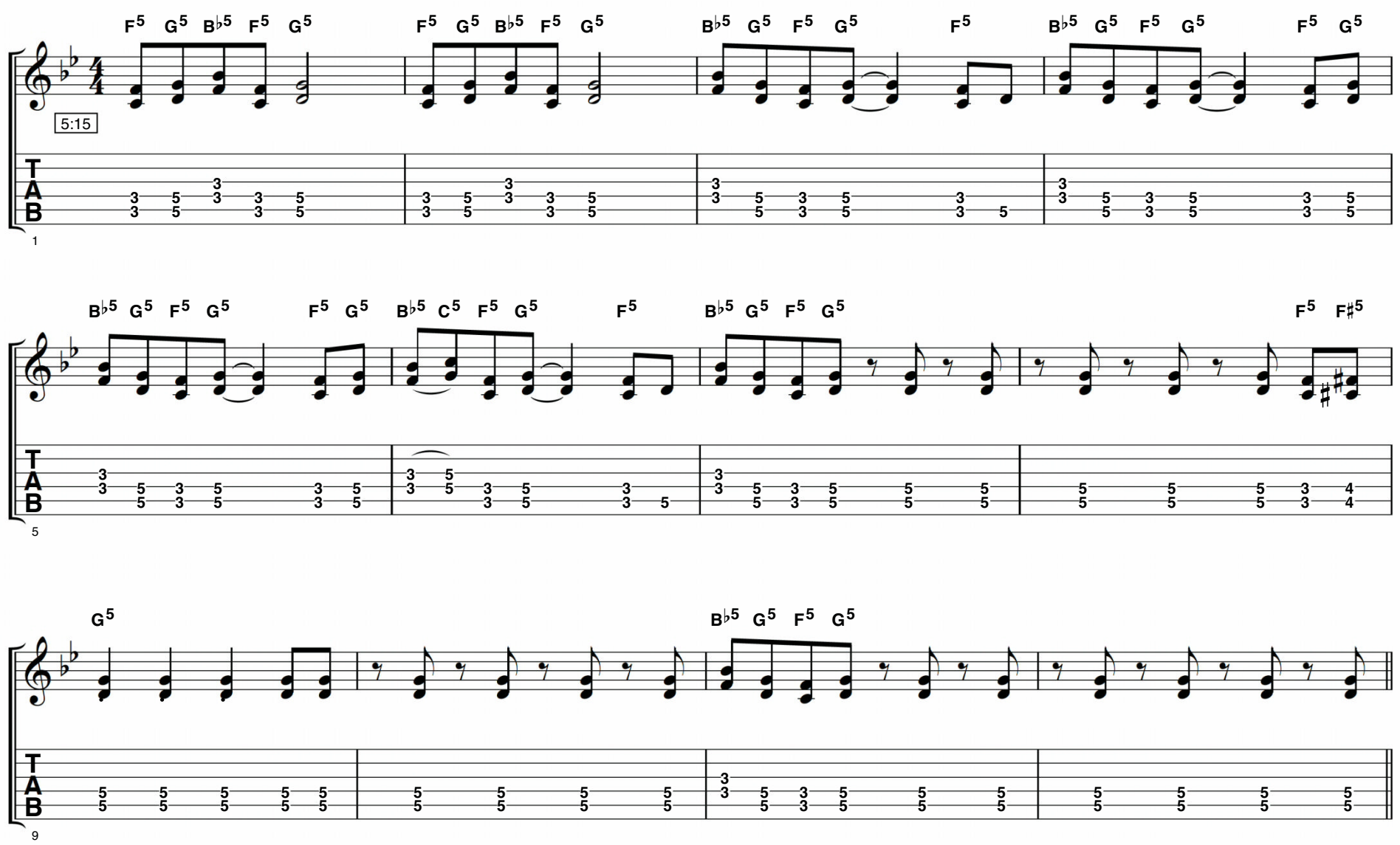

C5
(8va)
PB 13
BU
PB 13
BU
18


F5
1/4
PB 5
BU
BD
1/4
BU
BU
20

DEEP PURPLE SMOKE ON THE WATER Solo (cont'd) **BIT.LY/TG356AUDIO**



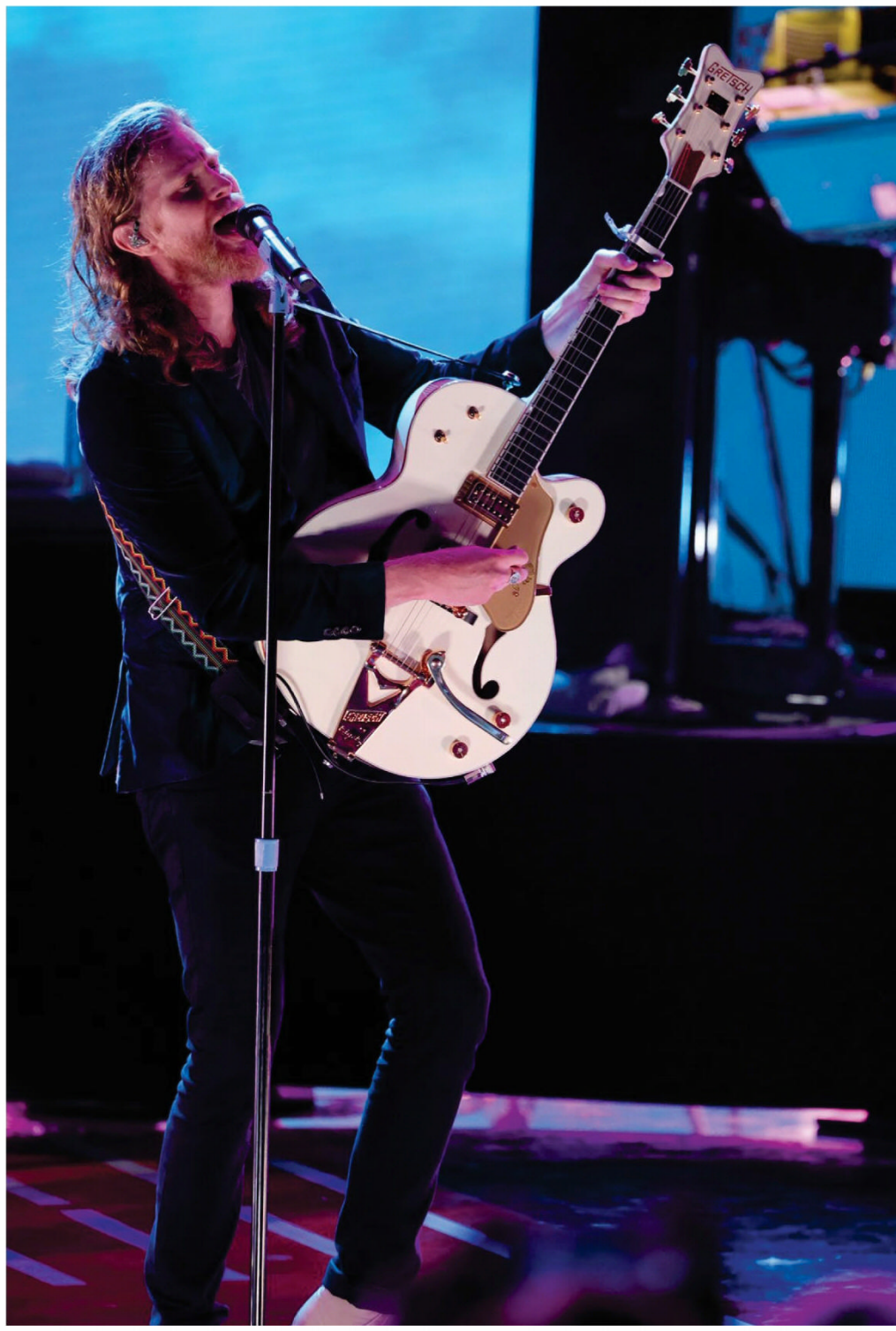
For the pre-bend in bar 2, place your third finger on the 13th fret, silently bend the string up by a tone and then pick it, letting the note ring out as you release the bend. In bar 6, you have to pre-bend the string by a tone, lower the bend by a semitone, then re-bend back up. Listen carefully – it should be a semitone pitch change.

DEEP PURPLE SMOKE ON THE WATER Outro **BIT.LY/TG356AUDIO**

Play each two-note chord using one finger to cover both strings. A mixture of first, second and third fingers should get you through the section. Count to four to keep time. Most of the rhythms are based on eighth notes so try counting '1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &' to pick these out.

THE LUMINEERS
HO HEY

Hey! Let's take a look at Rockschool's beginner arrangement of The Lumineers' feel-good hit from 2012

The debut single from The Lumineers' self-titled first album, *Ho Hey* was a worldwide success for the then-unknown newcomers. The song has remained popular ever since, racking up over 750m streams on Spotify to date. It's fun to play, and here in Rockschool's Debut Grade arrangement, it's pretty easy, too. C, Am and G chords are essentials for every beginner guitarist, representing some of the most fundamental basics of our instrument. And, though you'll need to be familiar with these shapes, there's a little more to the arrangement thanks to the use of 'partial' chord shapes. This means you'll be playing part of each chord, instead of every note – a simple enough idea, but it comes with a challenge too: if you're only playing two or three notes out of a chord, you'll need to make sure you've got the idle strings under control. Read our tab carefully to identify the relevant strings to pluck.



RSL Awarding the Contemporary Arts

Whether you're taking your first steps on guitar or moving into further/higher education, a Rockschool Grade will improve your playing ability whilst you learn iconic tracks from the world of popular music. For more info visit: www.rslawards.com

facebook.com/rslawards
instagram.com/rslawards
@RSLAwards

HO HEY
Words and Music by Jeremy Fraites and Wesley Schultz.
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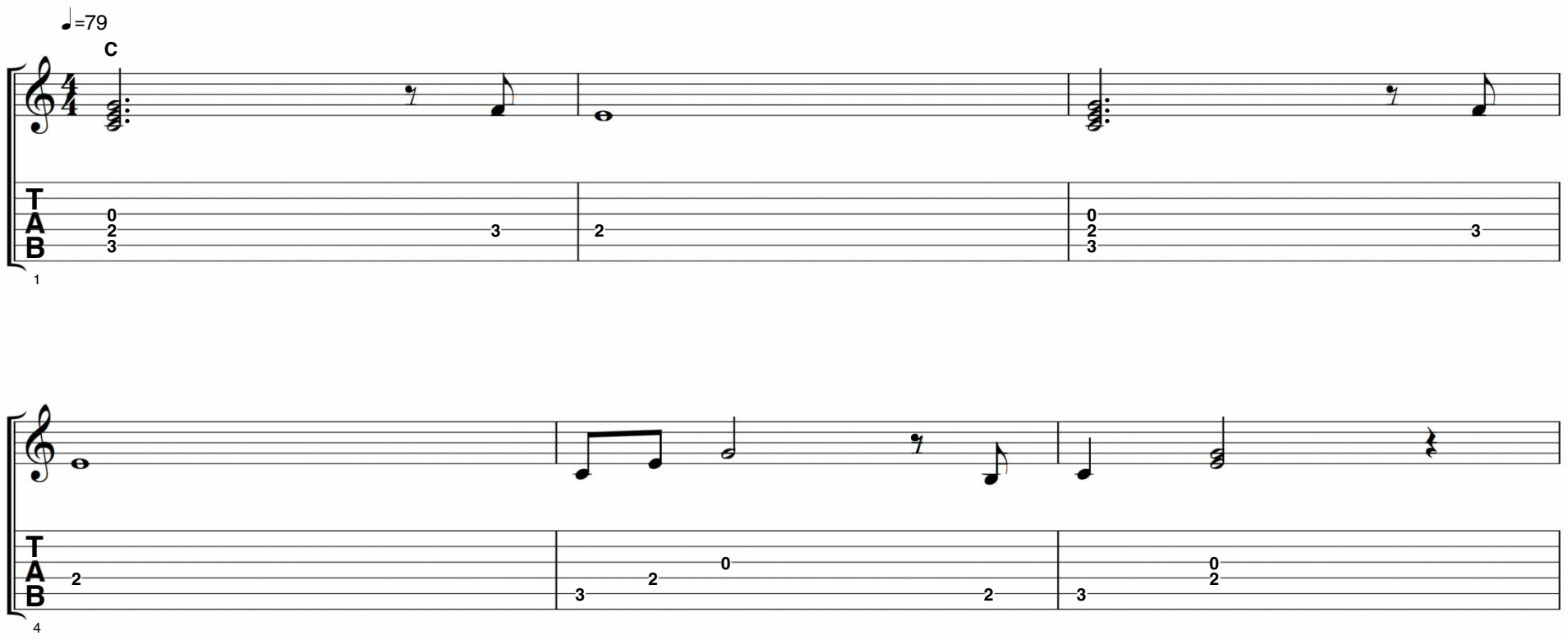
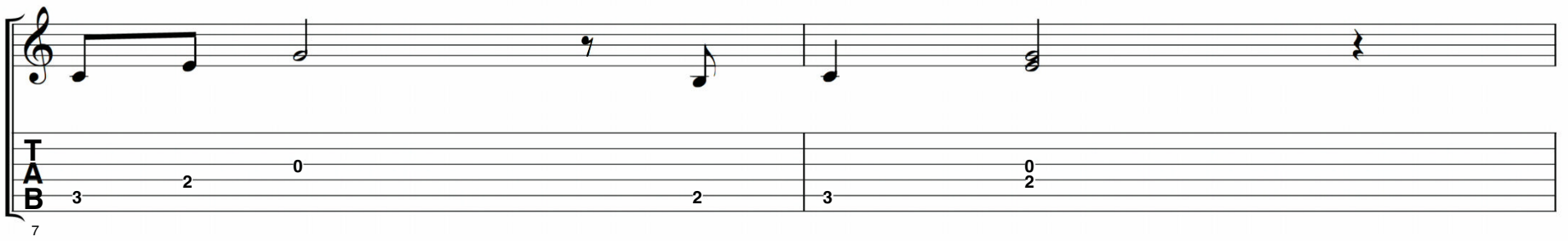
THE LUMINEERS HO HEY **BIT.LY/TG356AUDIO**

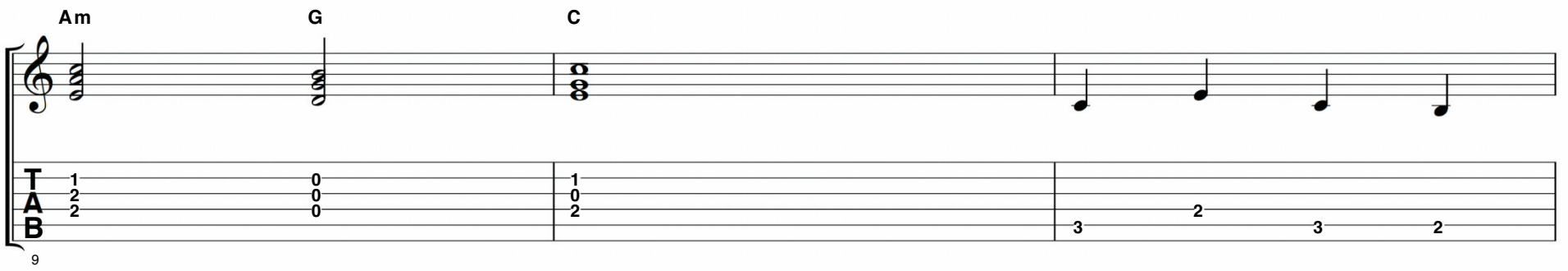


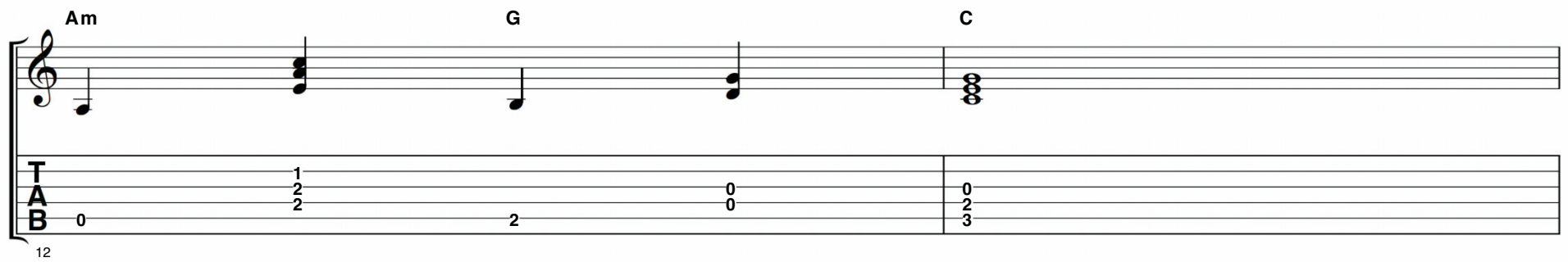
Words Jono Harrison Photo Getty

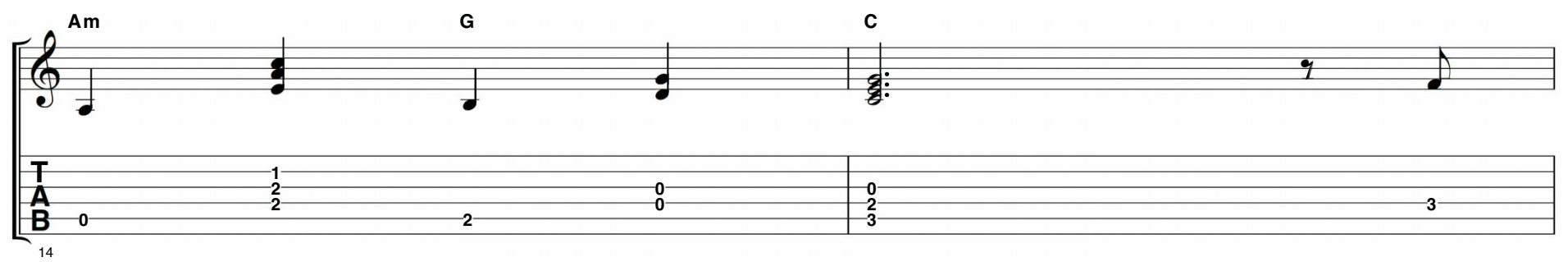
THE LUMINEERS HO HEY

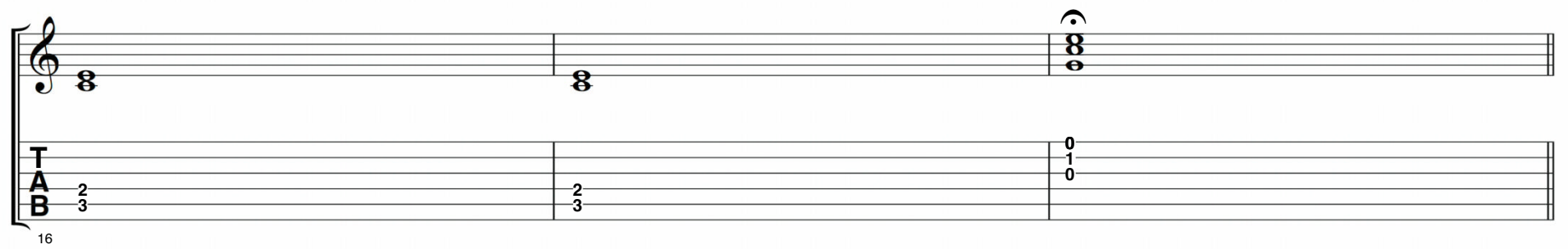
BIT.LY/TG356AUDIO











Rockschool's Debut Grade arrangement is a simplified version of The Lumineers' original track, but it's a great way for beginners to tackle the piece. Notice how the partial chords are derived from full open chord shapes (C, Am and G), and take care each time you come to fret a note that's not contained in a chord. For example, the last note in bar 1 doesn't appear in the C chord, so it'll need a finger adjustment to play it.

OPEN-MIC SONGBOOK

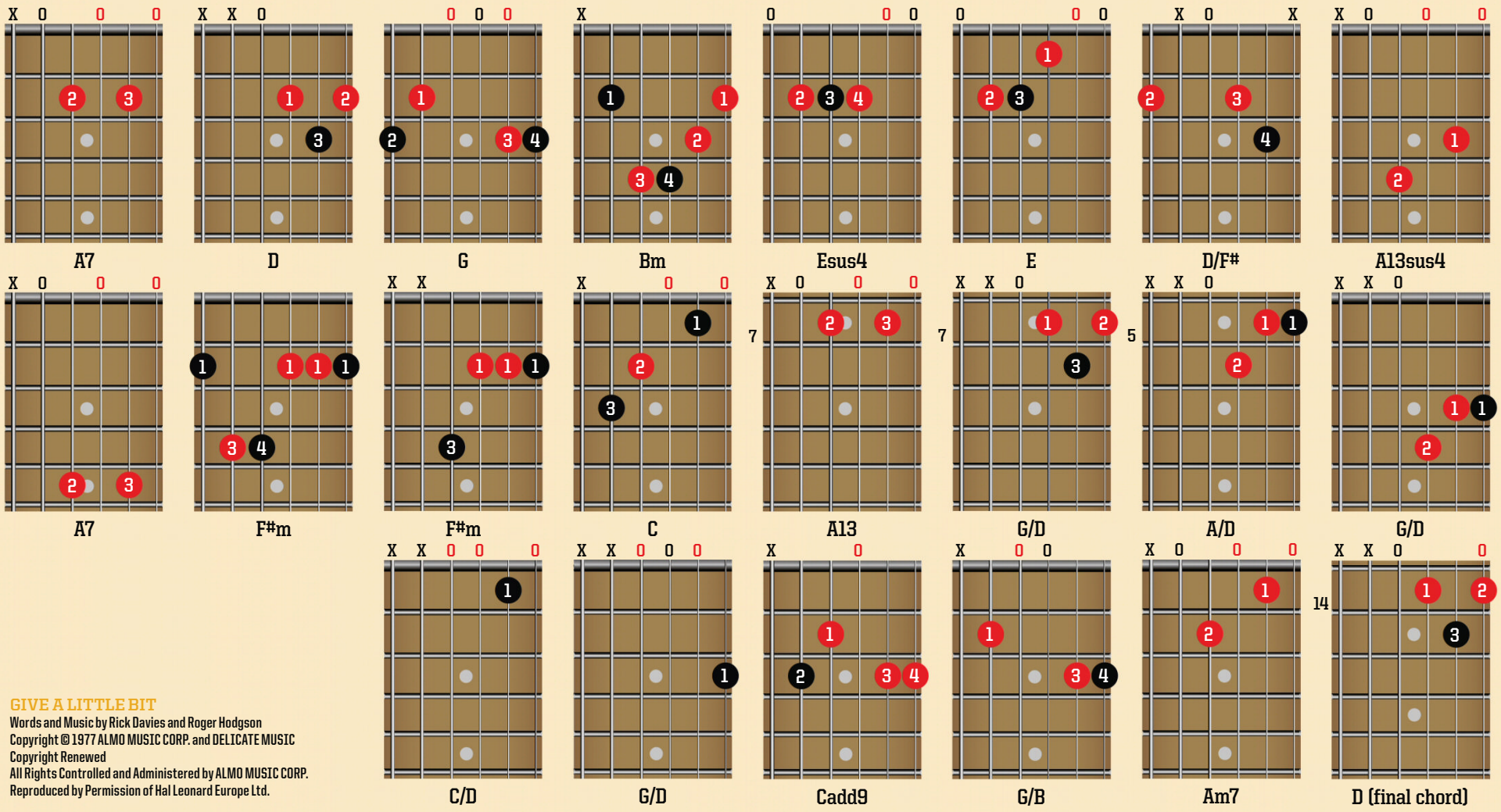
SUPERTRAMP
GIVE A LITTLE BIT

Supertramp's timeless classic deserves a place in every guitarist's open-mic repertoire. We break it down for you...

1977 was the year that Supertramp became worldwide superstars. Their fifth long player *Even In The Quietest Moments* was less prog, more pop, and it became their first gold-selling disc. Album opener, *Give A Little Bit* was released as a single – a song that quickly became the band's anthem in live shows. Singer/guitarist/songwriter Roger Hodgson drives the arrangement with powerful rhythm work on 12-string acoustic, marking a change of direction from Supertramp's earlier Wurlitzer piano dominated sound. The 12-string has a full and distinctive sound, but you don't really need one to enjoy playing this song; it works just as well on a six-string acoustic or with jangly electric clean tones. Throughout the song, chord changes are frequently 'anticipated' by playing on the last offbeat of the bar. This isn't a 'push' as such because it's not tied across the barline. But it gives the song a strong sense of motion and positivity, matching the upbeat vibe of the lyric.

CHORDS

Yes, you'll need a whole bunch of chord shapes to play this song but, apart from F#m (which we've provided an alternative shape for) and Bm, they're open shapes and simple variations that you'll surely recognise. It's important to use the fingering shown for the first three chords (A7, D and G) to allow you to make those quick chord changes in the chorus riff.



GIVE A LITTLE BIT
Words and Music by Rick Davies and Roger Hodgson
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Guitars and backing Phil Capone Photo Getty

BACKING TRACK (BIT.LY/TG356AUDIO)
This song comes with a full backing track. Enter the above link into your web browser of choice; press play and jam along, guitaraoke style!

SONGSHEET

Give A Little Bit

Chorus 1
D A7
Give a little bit
D G A7 G A7 G
Give a little bit of your love to me
D A7
Give a little bit
D G A7 G A7 G
I'll give a little bit of my love to you

Post-chorus 1
Bm Esus4 E D/F#
There's so much that we need to share
G A13sus4 A7 A13sus4 A7
So send a smile and show you care

Chorus 2
D A7
I'll give a little bit
D G A7 G A7 G
I'll give a little bit of my life for you
D A7
So give a little bit
D G A7 G A7 G
Give a little bit of your time to me

Post-chorus 2
Bm Esus4 E D/F#
See the man with the lonely eyes
G
Oh, take his hand
A13sus4 A7 A13sus4 A7
You'll be surprised

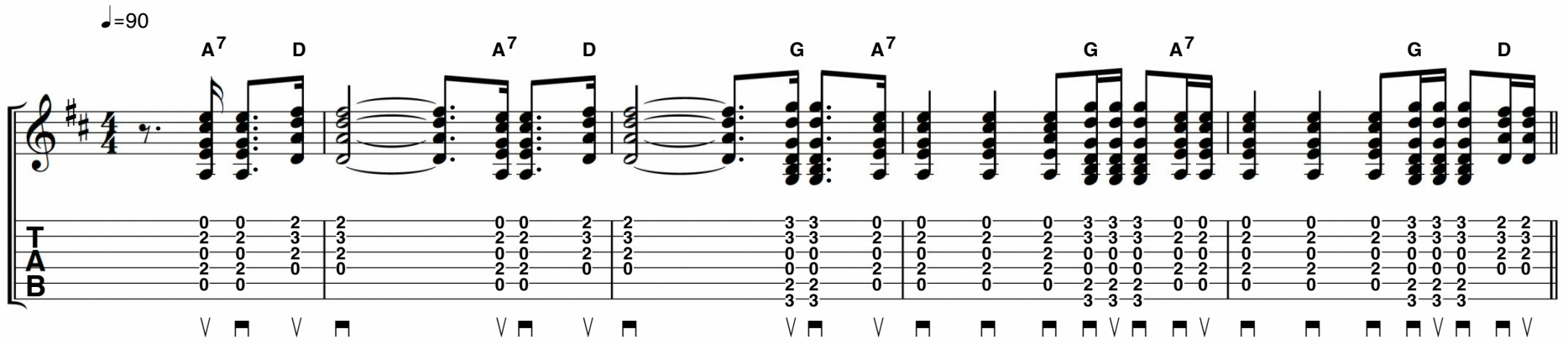
Sax Solo
F♯m Bm F♯m Bm
F♯m G C G
A7 A13sus4 A7 A13
(Play last two bars 3 times)

Chorus 3
D A7
Give a little bit
D G A7 G A7 G
Give a little bit of your love to me
D A7
Give a little bit
D G A7 G A7 G
I'll give a little bit of my life for you

Post-chorus 3
Bm Esus4 E D/F#
Now's the time that we need to share
G C G
So find yourself, we're on our way back home
A7 A13sus4 A7 A13 A7 A13sus4
Oh, going home
A7 A13
Don't you need, don't you need to feel at home
A7 A13sus4 A7 A13
Oh yeah, we gotta sing

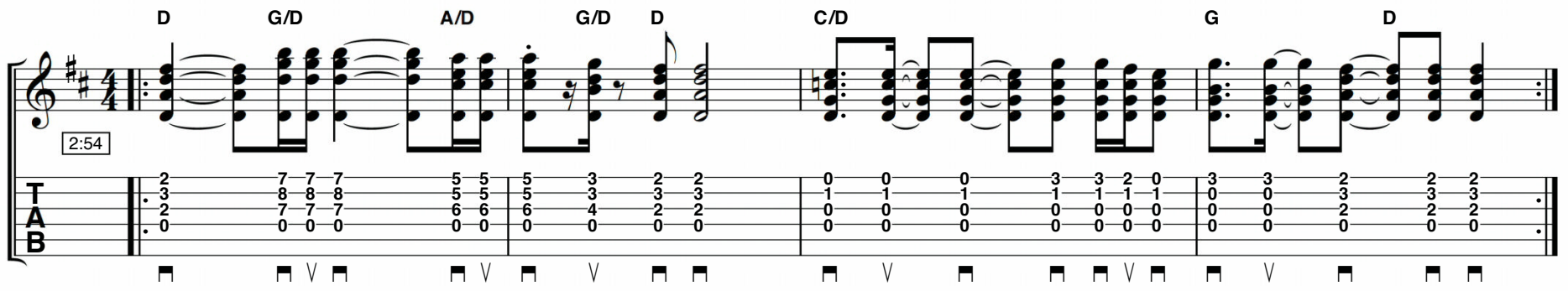
Outro
D G/D A/D G/D D
Ooooh...
C/D G/D D
You gotta get a feeling... Ooh yeah
D G/D A/D G/D D
Come along too... Whoo (ad lib)
C/D G/D D
Come-a, come-a, come-a
D G/D A/D G/D D
Come along (ad lib)
C/D G/D D
Ooh yeah, Oooh yeah
D G/D A/D G/D D
Come along too (ad lib)
C/D G/D D
(no vocals)
C/D G/D D
Sing Betty Lou (hold note)
C/D G/D D
(hold note)
Cadd9
Come along too
G/B
What a long ride
Am7 G
Come a long way, Oh
A7 D G/D A/D G/D D
Sing it to - night

SUPERTRAMP GIVE A LITTLE BIT Intro **BIT.LY/TG356AUDIO**



This is the intro rhythm played right at the start of the track. It's fairly 'spacious' here, but try to get a feel for the 16th-note rhythms in bars 3 and 4. These gradually develop into the busier rhythms of the chorus that follows the end of our tabbed section.

SUPERTRAMP GIVE A LITTLE BIT Outro **BIT.LY/TG356AUDIO**

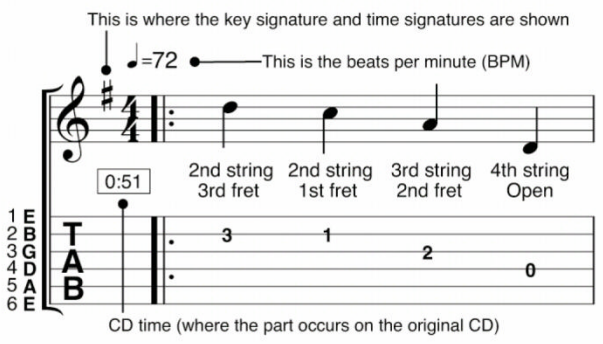


There are some fiddly chord changes and a tricky rhythm here. We'd say it's best practised slowly until you get a feel for it. Keep the initial D shape intact when changing to G/D at the 7th fret, and be ready to change shape on the A/D chord that follows.

TAB GUIDE

Get more from TG by understanding our easy-to-follow musical terms and signs

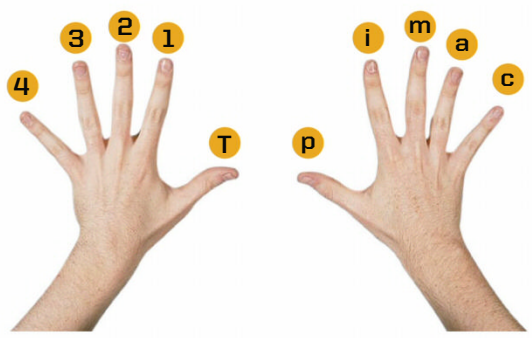
What is tab?



Tab is short for tablature, a notational system used to give detailed information as to where notes should be played on the fretboard. Tab appears underneath conventional music notation as six horizontal lines that represent the strings of the guitar, from the sixth (thick) string at the bottom to the first (thin) string at the top. On these lines, numbers represent which frets you place your fingers. For example, an A note on the 2nd fret, third string, will be shown as a number '2' on the third line down on the tab. Unfretted strings are shown with a '0'. The key and time signatures are shown in the notation. TG also includes a timestamp to tell you where in the original track you'll find each example and tempo expressed in beats per minute.

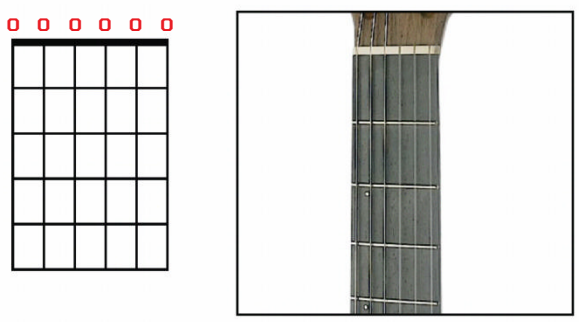
FRET BOXES: CHORDS, SCALES AND CAPO NOTATION

HAND LABELLING



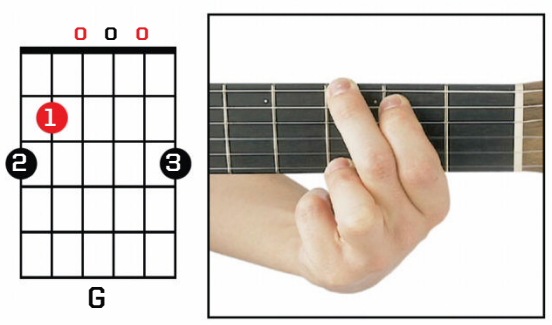
Here are the abbreviations used for each finger. Fretting hand: **1, 2, 3, 4, (T)** Picking hand: **p (thumb)**, **i (index)**, **m (middle)**, **a (annular)**, **c (little finger)**

NUT AND FRETBOARD



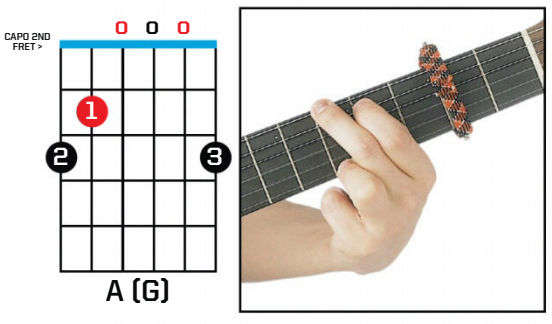
This fretbox diagram represents the guitar's fretboard exactly, as seen in the photo. This design is used for ease of visualising a fretboard scale or chord quickly.

CHORD EXAMPLE



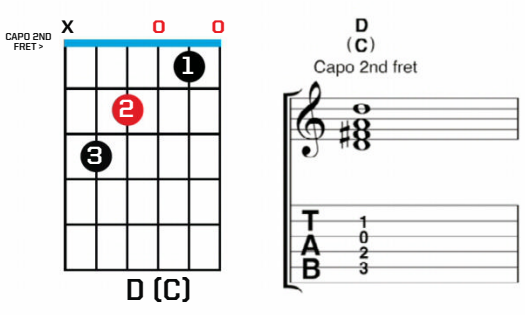
This diagram represents a G chord. The 'o's are open strings, and a circled number is a fretting hand finger. A black 'o' or circled number is the root note (here, G).

CAPO EXAMPLE



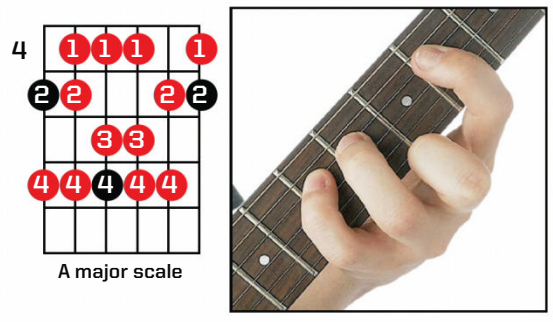
The blue line in the diagram represents a capo for this A chord, place it at the 2nd fret. Capos change the fret number ordering. Here, the original 5th fret now becomes the 3rd fret, 7th fret now 5th fret, etc.

CAPO NOTATION



Here the chord looks like a C in the tab, but the capo on the 2nd fret raises the pitch to make it a D. The 2nd fret capo'd notes are shown with a '0' in the tab as if they were open strings.

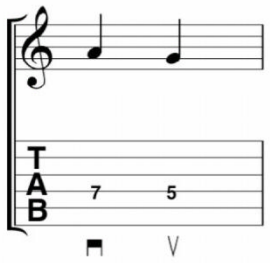
SCALE EXAMPLE



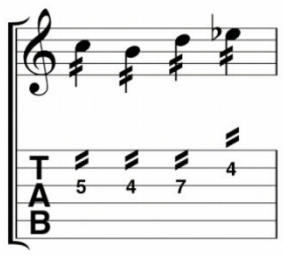
The fret box diagram illustrates the fret hand fingering for the A major scale using black dots for root notes and red dots for other scale tones. The photo shows part of the scale being played on the fourth string with the first, third and fourth fingers.

GUITAR TECHNIQUES: PICKING

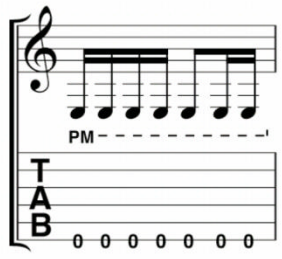
DOWN AND UP-PICKING



The symbols under the tab tell you the first note is to be down-picked and the second note is to be up-picked.

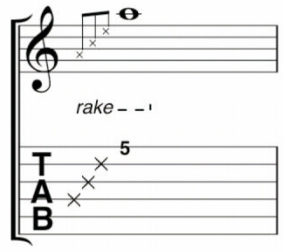
TREMOLO PICKING

Each of the four notes are to be alternate-picked (down and up-picked) very rapidly and continuously.

PALM MUTING



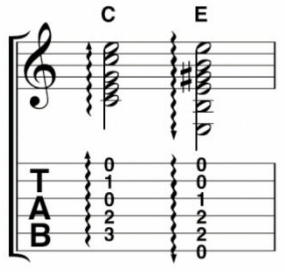
Palm-mute by resting the edge of your picking hand palm on the strings near the bridge saddles.

PICK RAKE



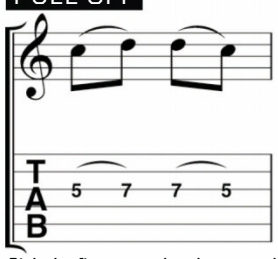
Drag the pick across the strings shown with a single sweep. This is often used to augment a rake's last note.

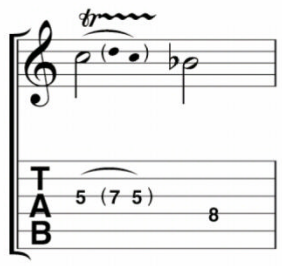
APPREGGIATED CHORD

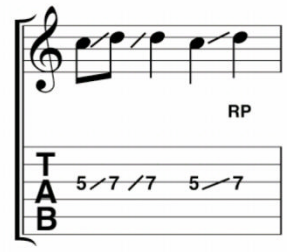


Play the notes of the chord by strumming across the relevant strings in the direction of the arrow head.

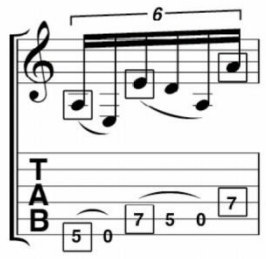
FRETTING HAND

HAMMER-ON & PULL-OFF

Pick the first note then hammer down on the string for the second note. Pick the third note and pull-off for the fourth note.

NOTE TRILLS

After picking the first note, rapidly alternate between the two notes shown in brackets using hammer-ons and pull-offs.

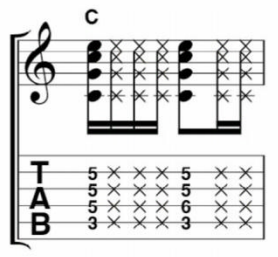
SLIDES (GLISSANDO)

Pick the first note and then slide to the next. For the last two notes pick the first, slide to the next and then re-pick it (RP).

FRET-HAND TAPPING



Sound the notes marked with a square by hammering-on/tapping with your fret hand fingers, instead of picking.

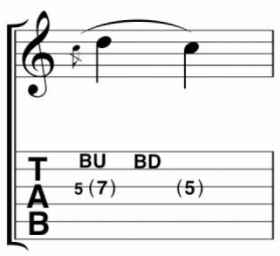
FRET-HAND MUTING



X markings represent notes and strings that are muted by your fret hand when struck by your picking hand.

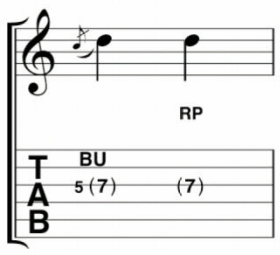
BENDING AND VIBRATO

BEND AND RELEASE



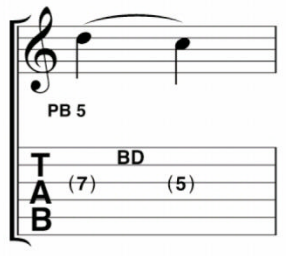
Fret the first note (here, the 5th fret) and bend up to the pitch of the bracketed note, before releasing again.

RE-PICKED BEND

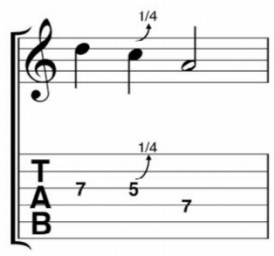


Bend up to the pitch shown in the brackets, then re-pick the note while holding the bent note at the pitch shown.

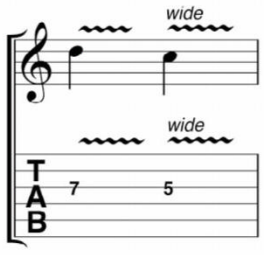
PRE-BEND



Silently bend the string up from the 5th fret (PB5) to the pitch of the 7th fret note, pick it and release to the 5th fret note.

QUARTER-TONE BEND

Pick the note then bend up a quarter-tone (a very small amount). This is sometimes referred to as a 'blues curl'.

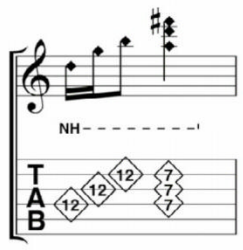
VIBRATO



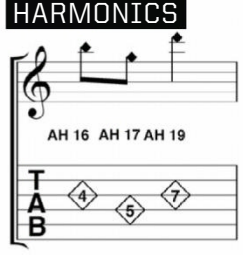
Your fretting hand vibrates the string by small bend-ups and releases. Exaggerate this effect to create a 'wide' vibrato.

HARMONICS

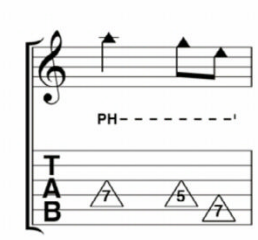
NATURAL HARMONICS



Pick the note while lightly touching the string directly over the fret indicated. A chiming harmonic results.

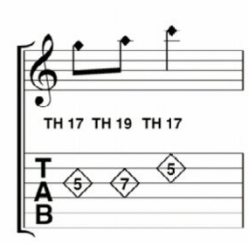
ARTIFICIAL HARMONICS

Fret the note as shown, then lightly place your index finger directly over 'x' fret (AH'x') and pick (with a pick, p or a).

PINCHED HARMONICS



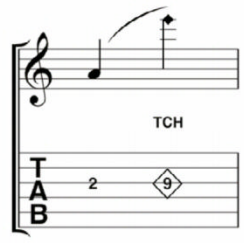
After fretting the note in the triangle, dig into the string with the side of your thumb as you sound it with the pick.

TAPPED HARMONICS



Place your finger on the note as shown, but sound it with a quick pick hand tap at the fret shown (TH17) for a harmonic.

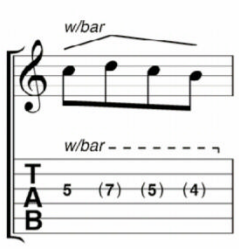
TOUCHED HARMONICS



A previously sounded note is touched above the fret marked TCH (eg, TCH 9) for it to sound a harmonic.

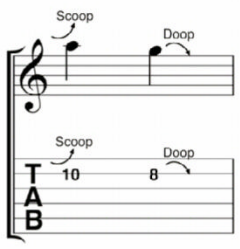
VIBRATO BAR / WHAMMY BAR

WHAMMY BAR BENDS



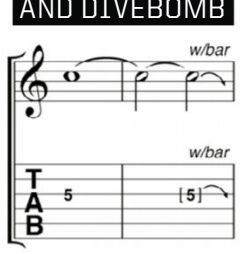
The note is picked as shown, then the vibrato bar is raised and lowered to the pitches shown in brackets.

SCOOP AND DOOP



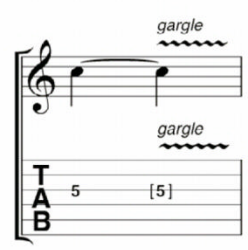
Scoop: depress the bar just before striking the note and release. Doop: lower the bar slightly after picking note.

SUSTAINED NOTE AND DIVEBOMB



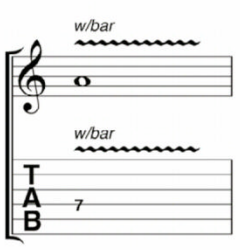
A Note is sustained then the vibrato bar is depressed to slack. The square bracket indicates a further articulation.

GARGLE



Sound the note and 'flick' the vibrato bar with your picking hand so it 'quivers'. This results in a 'gargling' sound!

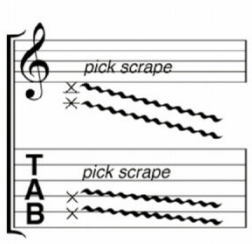
WHAMMY BAR VIBRATO



Gently rock the whammy bar to repeatedly bend the pitch up and down. This sounds similar to fret hand vibrato.

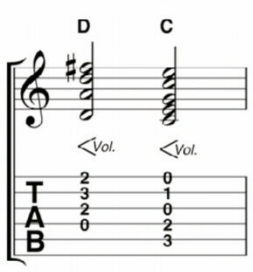
OTHERS

PICK SCRAPE

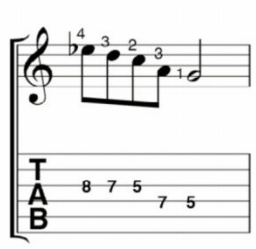


The edge of the pick is dragged either down or up along the lower strings to produce a scraped sound.

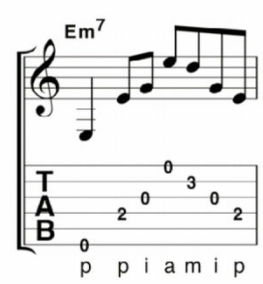
VIOLINING



Turn the volume control down, sound the note(s) and then turn the volume up for a smooth fade in.

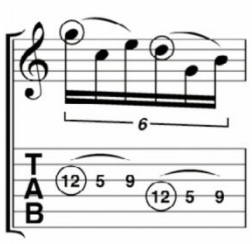
FINGER NUMBERING

The numbers in the traditional notation refer to the fingers required to play each note.

PIMA DIRECTIONS



Any kind of fingerpicking requirements are shown at the bottom of the tab notation.

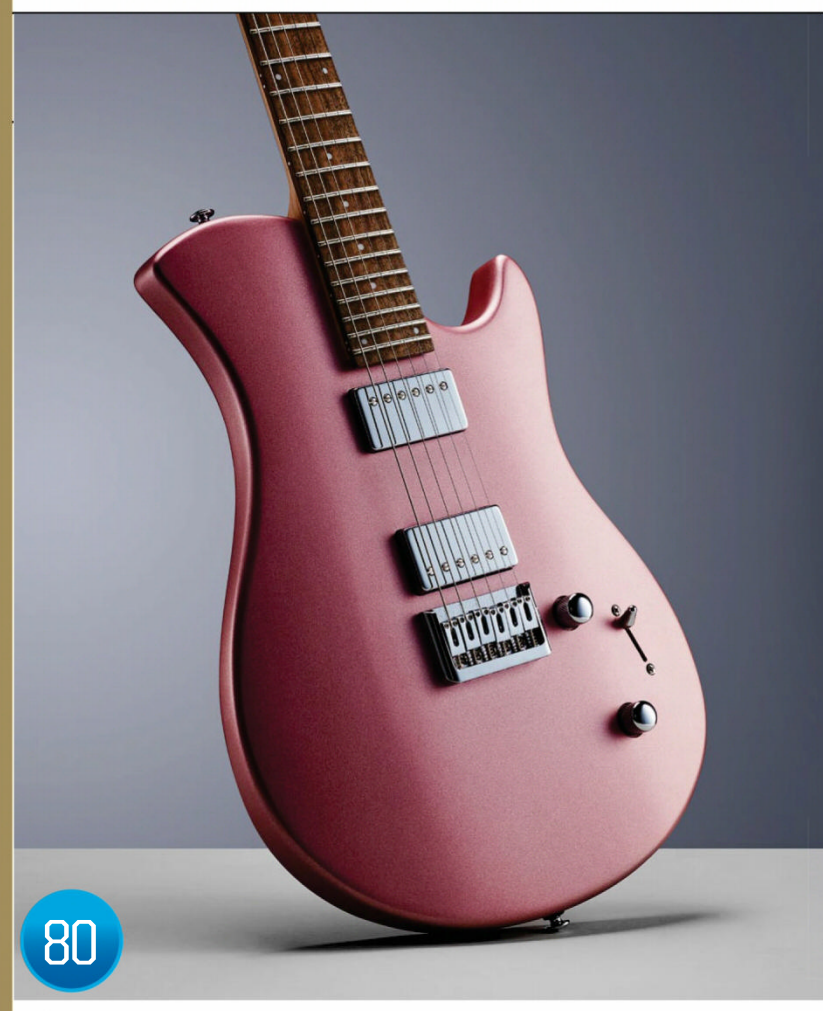
PICK HAND TAPPING



Tap (hammer-on) with a finger of your picking hand onto the fret marked with a circle. Usually with 'i' or 'm'.

THE GAS STATION

REAL WORLD REVIEWS OF THE BEST NEW GEAR



Welcome to the GAS (Gear Acquisition Syndrome*) Station! Every issue, TG scours the market for the hottest new gear and brings you transparent reviews that you can trust. From the smallest of accessories that make your life easier, to big investments, such as brand new guitars, amps and effects pedals – if it's worth your attention, you'll find it here!

HOW WE TEST

CURATION

Our product selection is driven by our love of gear. We select the most exciting products on the market every month to bring you opinions you can trust.

FACE-VALUE REVIEWS

We're not gear snobs here at *Total Guitar*. We judge it on whether it looks good, sounds good and plays well – not by the name on the headstock.

*WHAT IS GAS?

Gear Acquisition Syndrome is the guitar-player's never-ending urge to acquire new gear, irrespective of whether they actually need it. Don't pretend you don't have it – we all do!

NO SNAKE OIL

You won't find us getting hung up on hokey mythology or nonsense marketing speak: we aim to bring you bullsh*t-free opinions on the gear you're interested in.

WE CAN'T BE BOUGHT

TG review scores are a true reflection of our experts' opinion on the product they've been testing. You'll never find a rating in our mag that has been bought and paid for.

REAL WORLD REVIEWS

We test every product under the conditions that they were designed for. For example, if an amp is designed to be played loud, rest assured that we'll have tested it at rehearsal/gig volumes!

BEST BUY AWARD

TG Best Buy Awards are reserved for stand-out products that earn a 4.5 star overall rating. This is the most exciting new gear that you *need* to check out

Total Guitar BEST BUY AWARD

PLATINUM AWARD

Reserved for the very best of the best, TG's Platinum Awards are given to class-leading, gamechanging products that score a maximum 5 stars in every category.

Total Guitar PLATINUM AWARD

★★★★★ SUPERB, A BEST BUY
★★★★½ EXCELLENT
★★★½☆ ABOVE AVERAGE KIT
★★½☆☆ SOME ISSUES
★½☆☆☆ POOR

79 START ME UP
Five new products you need to check out

80 TRINITY BY RELISH
The Swiss-designed Trinity is the most affordable guitar yet to feature pickup swapping

84 IK MULTIMEDIA X-GEAR PEDALS
Do you like the effects in your Amplitube software? Here's four pedals that will let you use them onstage

92 BOSS SY-200 GUITAR SYNTHESIZER
Retro cool with tones to match?

94 ELECTRO-HARMONIX RIPPED SPEAKER
A stompbox that celebrates lo-fi distortion

04

02

01

03

05

START ME UP!

Five awesome new products to get your gear engine revving this month...

WALRUS MAKO M1

1 Universal Audio's Astra dazzled us last year with its quality recreations of classic modulation units in one pedal, but now Walrus have their own High-Fidelity Modulation Machine that could become an inspirational source for all your chorus, phaser, tremolo, vibrato, rotary and filter. Nine onboard presets and 128 available via MIDI is certainly going to come in very useful, with the onboard Lo-Fi control allowing players to warp and degrade the six algorithms.

£319
www.walrusaudio.com

SQUIER CLASSIC VIBE BARITONE CUSTOM TELECASTER

2 The temptation to add a baritone to your collection may have reached tipping point with this double bound 27-inch-scale beauty. Available in Black and 3-Colour Sunburst, it continues Squier's recent Tele extended excursions that began with the Paranormal Series Cabronita, with Fender-designed alnico single-coil pickups, C-shape maple neck with 9.5"-radius laurel fingerboard and narrow-tall frets.

£429
www.fender.com

HARLEY BENTON G112A-FR ACTIVE CABINET

3 With the growth in amp modelling and multi-effects units comes a burgeoning market for full range and flat response (aka FRFR) active cabs that can deliver for the home, practice room and stage. Harley Benton already has form in this department with the excellent FRFR-112A but this more compact 1x12" 100-watt RMS solution could be just the ticket for many guitarists.

£198
www.harleybenton.com

FENDER HAMMERTONE PEDALS

4 Fender has gone all-in since it launched its pedal line in 2018, and this new nine-stompbox range offers slimmer cases and prices too. The Hammertone range covers distortions, overdrive, delays, reverb, chorus and fuzz withy digital and analogue circuits. The contrast of grey powder-coated casing a bright control colours continues the big F's attention to visual flair, and we're hoping these pedals deliver on the tone front, too.

£69.99 – £84.99, from April
www.fender.com

POSITIVE GRID SPARK CONTROL

5 The runaway success of Positive Grid's Spark practice amp was only very slightly marred by the lack of foot controller to enhance its user experience. Now PG have delivered with the Bluetooth Spark Control that boasts four footswitch selectable 'scenarios' that go beyond preset and effects selection and also covering starting and stopping backing tracks. It offers up to four months battery life on a single charge, too.

$109
www.positivegrid.com

TRINITY BY RELISH

£599

The Swiss-designed Trinity is the most affordable guitar yet to feature pickup swapping. What's that? Let's find out...

Mucking around with our guitars is something many of us love to do, isn't it? The most obvious bit of tinkering is a pickup swap to refresh or re-voice a guitar that perhaps you've fallen out of love with. If you're handy with a soldering iron it's a pretty simple job, but if you're not you'll need the help of a mate or a pro. But not anymore. Imagine being able to swap a pickup in seconds without de-tuning your strings or even unplugging your guitar from the amp let alone warming up that soldering iron. Nah, that's not possible, you say. Oh, yes it is. The revolution is here.

While we might have seen the first example of no-solder pickup swapping on the short-lived Dan Armstrong Ampeg guitar back in 1969, Swiss-based guitar company Relish introduced it on their modernist Jane and Mary guitars a few years back although the high price of these guitars meant the concept languished. Then three years ago Relish sub-contracted Cor-Tek to build the simplified Trinity by Relish guitar in Indonesia. It was a step in the right direction, although it still cost close to £1,500. Now, version two of that guitar is available in some cool satin metallic colours and it's pretty much half the price, including a rugged gigbag, once you've budgeted for an extra set of pickups, which aren't included on this new version.

Trinity remains a modernistic statement with a shape that echoes the high-line Relish Jane and Mary guitars. The basswood body has a face that curves from the bass to treble side, along with a ribcage cutaway on the back. Its bolt-on maple neck is Fender-like in feel with a 25.59" scale length but sports 24 medium jumbo stainless steel frets – a great addition at this price. The simplistic style continues to the six-saddle bridge, non-locking enclosed tuners and basic master volume and tone controls with a three-way pickup selector.

But flip the guitar over and you'll see two open holes under the pickups. Via the very neat mounting system, the pickups attach to the body via small powerful magnets – you literally pull the pickups out and load a different set in place. There's a large bolt on the pickup mounting plate that allows you to adjust the pickup height, too.

> "YOU CAN SWAP PICKUPS WITHOUT EVEN UNPLUGGING"

Pulled straight from its gigbag, Trinity is nicely set-up (QC is still undertaken at Relish's Swiss HQ) and lightweight too at just 2.86kg (6.3lb). There's a lively, zingy acoustic response and plugged in we have no problem with the Relish XX pickup set that combines almost Seymour Duncan JB-like girth and power at bridge with a much more vintage PAF-style voice at neck. This classic-style pairing covers huge stylistic ground from classic rock through to more modern

1 NECK, FRETS & FINGERBOARD
In contrast to the body finish the neck has a natural satin coating. It features 24 stainless steel frets on the 10" radius fingerboard which is laurel – a rosewood alternative used by many brands including Gretsch.

2 PICKUPS
Trinity comes supplied with a set of Relish XX humbuckers which are made in Indonesia by Cor-Tek's massive pickup making facility, PSE. They mount to the guitar via Relish's patented pickup mounting system which allows you to pull them out and replace with different pickups in seconds without needing a soldering iron.

3 HARDTAIL BRIDGE
The hardtail bridge here has thru-body stringing, like a Telecaster, but the walled designed uses six block saddles. On the previous version of Trinity these were stainless steel, here they're chromed zinc.

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Basswood

NECK: Maple, bolt-on

SCALE: 25.59" (650mm)

FINGERBOARD: Laurel/10" radius

FRETS: 24, medium jumbo stainless steel

PICKUPS: 2x Relish XX humbuckers

CONTROLS: 3-way lever pickup selector, master volume and tone.

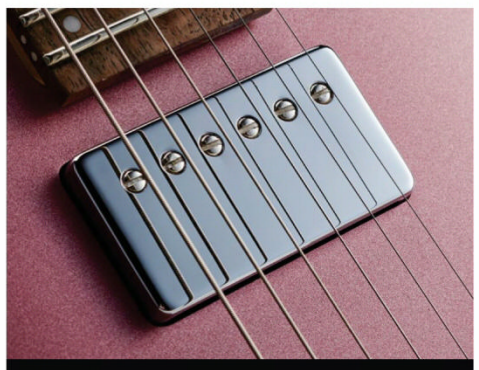
HARDWARE: Hard-tail six-saddle bridge w/ thru body stringing, enclosed tuners – chrome-plated

FINISH: Rose (as reviewed), Silver, Ice Blue and Olive Green metallics

CONTACT: Sound Affects, www.relishguitars.ch

Total Guitar BEST BUY AWARD

Photography Olly Curtis



Pickup Swapping?

Throw away your soldering iron: you can now swap pickups in moments!

Many of us like to swap pickups on our guitars but it can be quite a faff. The beauty of the Relish mounting system is that you can swap pickups in no time at all and re-voice your guitar instantly. Relish offers a range of their own pickups ready to load in as well as Bare Knuckle and Seymour Duncan.

Here in the UK, Sound Affects now offer a large range of Cream T and Seymour Duncan pickups ready to load in (more brands will follow) from £239 for a set. They'll also fit the Relish backplates to any humbucker you may already have (£99 for a set or £59 for one and that includes return postage in the UK).

metal, while the neck pickup alone could easily cover all of your blues and jazz intentions.

Along with our test guitar, Sound Affects sent us a couple of high-end 'Relish housed' Cream T pickups made here in the UK: a Duchess for neck and Original Banger for bridge position. These boutique pickups don't come cheap costing £199 each but they sound exceptional with superb clarity and vintage-y character. The Duchess is scanned from an early sixties Gibson ES-330 P90 and the Original Banger was personally conceived by Billy F. Gibbons. Our re-voiced Trinity guitar now has a sort of 'power Tele' vibe at bridge with a very rootsy, blues P90-style at neck: a real Jekyll and Hyde transformation that's performed in seconds. So, yes, additional pickups will add to your outlay but you can buy them slowly and build up quite a collection, as we all do with our FX pedals. When you need a different voice you swap 'em in seconds: you don't need another guitar, you don't need to touch your tuning and you don't need to heat up your soldering iron.

A little more sophistication in the control circuit would definitely help not least a simple treble bleed circuit on the volume control and a pull/push switched tone pot which would mean you could coil-split any four-conductor humbucker you load in. To be fair, both mods are easy to do and bearing in mind the cost reduction of Trinity V2 over the earlier model, perhaps we shouldn't complain.

New concepts and innovation are rare in our vintage-obsessed world, not least at the price of this guitar. Very competent build, stainless steel frets *and* pickup swapping potential for this outlay? Game on, we say.

Dave Burrluck

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★½
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★½
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★½
USABILITY	★★★★★
OVERALL RATING	★★★★½

ALSO TRY...

CREAM T CROSSFIRE £1799

This soon-to-be-launched UK-made offset uses an obeche body and bolt-on maple neck. It'll cost £1,999 with pickups, or if you're into this pickup swapping concept, without pickups at £1,799.

CREAM T AURORA STANDARD 2PS £2499

The Aurora Standard comes loaded with Cream T Whiskerbuckers plus a Duchess P90 single coil and Banger and Mash humbucker originally designed for Keith Richards.

RELISH MARY £2800

Relish's own Swiss-made guitars aren't cheap, but they include a semi-hollow aluminium frame construction, Ghost Piezo System with stereo outputs and, of course, their pickup swapping facility.

@rotosound_uk

OUR GENERATION

James Ford plays **Ultramag** high energy electric guitar strings for more power, sustain, and a longer string life than traditional nickel or steel strings

IK MULTIMEDIA X-GEAR PEDALS

Do you like the effects in your Amplitube software? Here's four pedals that will let you use them onstage

Digital is digital, right? If you have digital effects they should be able to be configured to run as a plug-in on a computer or in a pedal, it's just a matter of having the necessary DSP. We've recently seen Universal Audio, a massive name in studio plug-ins, moving into pedals for the first time and putting some of those in their UAFX modulation, delay and reverb pedals. Now it's the turn of IK Multimedia and it's maybe surprising that they haven't done it before, considering how long their Amplitube guitar amp and effects emulation software has been around. IK has released four pedals; one each for Modulation (X-Vibe), Delay (X-Time) and Reverb (X-Space) and another (X-Drive) for all the dirt sounds.

The pedals all feature both mono and stereo connectivity options, apart from the X-Drive which has a different set of functions for the four jack sockets. Each has 16 different effect algorithms and 300 slots to store presets arranged in banks. Presets can be easily edited by an array of five knobs to directly adjust the main parameters plus a push-and-turn parameter knob to access several more but you can also quickly edit presets in the included AmpliTube 5 SE software, transferring them back to the practical librarian app which manages all 300 in the pedal.
The USB computer connection also supports use of a pedal as an audio interface for recording. Each pedal has optional cab simulation with five different IRs for use at the end of a signal chain for recording or to go direct into a PA.

Recalling presets in live use is straightforward and pressing two footswitches at once will scroll through the banks. There are plenty of performance features including a socket to add an expression pedal or external footswitches and dedicated tap tempo footswitches for the X-Time and X-Vibe. There's also the X-Mode facility which lets you momentarily alter a parameter specific to an active preset by holding down its footswitch, and momentary operation of a bypassed preset in the same way. On top of that, each pedal has comprehensive MIDI implementation. Read on and let's get up close with each pedal.

£259

IK MULTIMEDIA AMPLITUBE X-GEAR X-VIBE

Modulation monster

The X-Vibe covers modulation and features all the popular types plus a few extra like the Step Slicer which gives you some cool synchronised rhythmic effects making good use of the tap tempo footswitch. Its sibling is the Step Filter which can deliver synth sequencer sounds. For more traditional on/off sounds you can use the Tremolo with a square wave shape but, as it features adjustable wave shape and envelope, it is also well capable of cool sine wave amp-like stylings and more. There are three chorus algorithms which adequately cover the effect's variations and include decent interpretations of that classic Boss CE pedal sound. Flanging is ably enabled by emulations of two pedal classics – the EHX Electric Mistress and the MXR 117 – both capable of some excellent metallic shadings. Those company's phasers are also represented with tasty sounding emulations of the Phase 90, Phase 100 and the Small Stone. There are in fact five dedicated phaser algorithms which is probably overkill unless you're a phasing freak. You can't cover classic modulation without including a Uni-Vibe and that's represented here with both its 'Chorus' and 'Vibrato' modes – combine it with the Fuzzface or Octavia emulations in the X-Drive for a Hendrix experience. The Rotary speaker simulation sounds pretty good as might be expected as IK Multimedia have the licensed for the official Leslie software. However, while there's a practical range of editable parameters, the only thing that emulates that natural acceleration/deceleration that's inherent when changing speeds is the X-mode feature, which will ramp up from a slow speed to the maximum as long as the footswitch is held down, but does nothing if your preset is already set to a fast speed. You can get more nuanced control via an expression pedal.

AT A GLANCE

FEATURES: Selectable True or Buffered bypass, 300 presets, tap tempo, librarian software and Amplitube 5 SE included, Safe mode (locks knobs), cab sim, audio interface capability

EFFECTS: 80 Chorus, Chorus 1, Chorus X, 60 Vibe, Phazer 9, Phazer 10, Phazer CL, Fox, Stone, Electric, Doubler, Metallic, Rotary, Tremolo, Step Slice, Step Filter

CONTROLS: Model/Back, Preset/Save, Parameter, Speed, Depth, Bass, Mid, Treble, footswitch A, footswitch B, Tap footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard inputs (L/Mono, R), standard outputs (L/Mono, R), MIDI In, MIDI Out, Ext. Control, USB

POWER: Supplied 9V DC adaptor 260mA

DIMENSIONS: 176 (w) x 144 (d) x 60 mm (h)

£259

IK MULTIMEDIA AMPLITUBE X-GEAR X-TIME

Digital delay delivers

The X-Time has a comprehensive collection of delay types onboard – enough to cater for many musical applications both conventional and esoteric. Of the former, the digital delay is as straight and pristine as it comes but if you are looking for something a bit more old-school there are two tape echoes, both offering a neat emulation of that medium's tonal shift and saturation. One has a single knob to emulate wow and flutter while the other has separate controls for modulation rate and depth which can dial in rich chorusing. There's also a BBD-style analog delay that has adjustable saturation and filtering for the repeats so you can set just the right degree of degradation as the trail progresses – quite extreme if desired. Taking that theme further, the Dirty algorithm with its distortion and phasing can give the bizarre effect that the repeats are being played through a fully saturated hi-gain amp while your main sound remains clean. The Pitch algorithm lets you set intervals for delays of different pitches but, as it lets you set specific delay times for three repeats, you can also dial in a multitap delay if you set the pitch parameter to zero. There's also the Harm alogorithm that lets you set harmonised repeats. Massive ongoing ambiences are catered for by the Arctic algorithm where the sound passes through a flanger and a shimmer with a user-programmable pitched voice. A reverse delay lets you get into some psychedelic effects, especially if you nudge the Mix knob up to 100% wet so you just get the backwards guitar and, for more strangeness, X-Mode pushes the feedback of a delay to the edge in all algorithms. Elsewhere there's a dedicated slapback algorithm, dual, ducking, swelling and ping-pong delays, and a Pattern delay with 16 rhythmic patterns.

AT A GLANCE

FEATURES: Selectable True or Buffered bypass, 300 presets, tap tempo, librarian software and Amplitube 5 SE included, Safe mode (locks knobs), cab sim, audio interface capability

EFFECTS: Vtg Tape, Mod Tape, Analog, Digital, Ping Pong, Pattern, Dual, Reverse, Rev Pong, Swell, Duck, Pitch, Harm, Dirty, Slapback, Arctic

CONTROLS: Model/Back, Preset/Save, Parameter, Time, Feedback, Filter, Mod, Mix, footswitch A, footswitch B, Tap footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard inputs (L/Mono, R), standard outputs (L/Mono, R), MIDI In, MIDI Out, Ext. Control, USB

POWER: Supplied 9V DC adaptor 260 mA

DIMENSIONS: 176 (w) x 144 (d) x 60 mm (h)

£259

IK MULTIMEDIA AMPLITUBE X-GEAR X-SPACE

Ambience aplenty

With no tap tempo footswitch needed for reverb, you get instant footswitch access to three presets rather than the two found in the delay and modulation pedals which means you could perhaps have instant access to three different reverb types or three instances of the same reverb each stronger than the next. Many will be looking for a decent spring emulation and the one here is a viable substitute for inbuilt amp reverb and has plenty of parameters to mess with for some deep surf twang. Plate is also great on guitar and the one here is naturally tweakable to meld with your tone, having different damping parameters for the low, mid and high frequencies. Also onboard are a decent range of conventional reverbs – the type of bright chamber that gave many recording studios a distinctive ambience, plus real-word spaces of varying size; room, hall and church. There's also an early reflections algorithm capable of constructing the sound of very small spaces. For reverbs with altered envelopes, there's gated reverb that cuts off suddenly, one that swells in naturally and a ducking reverb that you can set to be subdued while you are playing to reduce clutter but come into prominence at the end of phrases. The rest of those here create larger altered ethereal and floaty ambiences, either employing modulation or pitchshifting for a sense of movement or otherworldliness. Of these, there are two types of shimmer, one where a single shimmer pitch can be set and the other with two pitches so you can set up harmonies. The X-Mode feature works to ramp up to the longest possible tail length so you can get into some infinite reverb stylings or build up massive crescendos. Overall it's a pretty comprehensive array of reverbs that shouldn't leave you wanting.

AT A GLANCE

FEATURES: Selectable True or Buffered bypass, 300 presets, librarian software and Amplitube 5 SE included, Safe mode (locks knobs), cab sim, audio interface capability

EFFECTS: Shimmer 1, Shimmer 2, Hall, Room, Chamber, Church, Plate, Spring, Swell, Gate, Reverse, Early Ref, Extreme, Ethereal, Bloom, Magnetic

CONTROLS: Model/Back, Preset/Save, Parameter, Time, Pre-Delay, Color, Mod, Mix, footswitch A, footswitch B, footswitch C

CONNECTIONS: Standard inputs (L/Mono, R), standard outputs (L/Mono, R), MIDI In, MIDI Out, Ext. Control, USB

POWER: Supplied 9V DC adaptor 260mA

DIMENSIONS: 176 (w) x 144 (d) x 60 mm (h)

£259

IK MULTIMEDIA AMPLITUBE X-GEAR X-DRIVE

Dig the dirt

Overdrive, Distortion or Fuzz, whatever your favoured flavour of dirt this pedal is designed to deliver it, and with three presets instantly available by footswitch you can have three favourites ready to go – albeit only one at a time. The pedal has mono input and output but there's a separate output with cab simulation for sending signal direct to a PA or for recording while you use the other output to feed your amp. There's also a headphones output for a bit of silent practice. Basically what is modelled here is a bunch of classic stompboxes (Tube Screamer, Fuzz Face, Big Muff, RAT etc) with a few of IK's generic algorithms thrown in for good measure like 'Modern', a valve-like overdrive, 'Blue' aimed at jazz and blues players and 'Crush' that messes with the sample rate for some aggressive in-yer-face distortion. The models of the classic pedals offer the essence of what the originals are about but there's an extended range of parameters available for each that goes far beyond what a simple three-knob (or similar) interface would provide; With each algorithm having extensive adjustment to EQ, compression and a noise gate, plus specific parameters like bias adjustment for the Fuzz Face emulation, there's plenty of scope for creating some bespoke sounds, making the X-Drive a massive distortion construction kit. A single effect at a time means that you can't stack them to make a composite sound but that's mitigated in part by all of the algorithms having an output boost available via the X-MODE feature. The amount of boost is fixed but it seems like a practical amount for onstage use, unfortunately there's an appreciable lag when kicking it in so you'd have to be careful with your timing to avoid an obvious volume jump in an inappropriate place.

AT A GLANCE

FEATURES: Selectable True or Buffered bypass, 300 presets, librarian software and Amplitube 5 SE included, Safe mode (locks knobs), cab sim, audio interface capability

EFFECTS: Modern, Metal, Monarch, Cat, Orange, Yellow, Green, Diode, Blue, Booster, H-Boost, Crush, Octofuzz, Purple, Fuzzface, Big-Fuzz

CONTROLS: Model/Back, Preset/Save, Parameter, Drive, Bass, Mid, treble, Volume, footswitch A, footswitch B, footswitch C

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output, standard Cab Sim output, standard Headphones output, MIDI In, MIDI Out, Ext. Control, USB

POWER: Supplied 9V DC adaptor 260mA

DIMENSIONS: 176 (w) x 144 (d) x 60 mm (h)

IK MULTIMEDIA AMPLITUBE X-GEAR X-VIBE

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★½
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★½
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★½
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★½
OVERALL RATING	★★★★½

IK MULTIMEDIA AMPLITUBE X-GEAR X-TIME

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★½
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★½
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★½
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★½
OVERALL RATING	★★★★½

IK MULTIMEDIA AMPLITUBE X-GEAR X-SPACE

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★½
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★½
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★½
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★½
OVERALL RATING	★★★★½

IK MULTIMEDIA AMPLITUBE X-GEAR X-DRIVE

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★½
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★½
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★½
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★½
OVERALL RATING	★★★★½

DO YOU NEED THEM ALL?

There's no denying that each of these pedals has a massive range of usable effects but are they for you? Well, they are large, so you'd have to consider whether dedicating that much pedalboard space to a pedal that delivers one effect at a time and in one genre is the best use of resources. The delay perhaps lends itself best to this type of role as it's quite probable you'll be wanting to switch between different delay types and delay times regularly and the X-Time can take care of that admirably while providing an eclectic range of delay types. Similarly, the X-Vibe has you covered with just about all the modulation you'd need as long as you only wanted one effect at a time. If you already had a favourite single sound modulation stompbox or two, it would be a practical complement to greatly expand your modulation choices. The X-Space is ideally suited if you like to explore ambiences, or want instant call-up of different aspects of reverb, but we are not sure that the X-Drive is as practical as running two or three separate pedals, although it could be a cracking sonic resource alongside one favourite drive pedal.

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17
28
38
48

D'ANGELICO PREMIER BEDFORD SH

£719

Retro cool with tones to match?

When D'Angelico launched its first solid body line of guitars back in 2018 they made a strong statement; three visually fresh shapes that bridged the NYC company's art deco touches with contemporary versatility. One of those models was the Bedford, and here it's branching into semi-hollow territory with the exciting prospect of an H/S/S pickup configuration that could be your do-it-all tone machine.

We can't resist a Daphne Blue Fender with the contrast of a tortoiseshell scratchplate, and here D'Angelico's Sky Blue and offset body combo delivers the same instant vintage-style appeal that pops. A more surprising touch is the satin wood finish on the back of the maple scarf join neck; it may break up the blue but it adds comfort.

> "THE SKY BLUE FINISH AND OFFSET BODY DELIVERS INSTANT VINTAGE-STYLE APPEAL"

And if you're coming to this from certain other electric models, you might well need it. Weighing in at a relatively hefty 8.4lbs, with a flatter 14" radius, this mahogany body beauty isn't going to be the easiest guitar for beginners. Our first port of call is a truss rod check and a necessary adjustment (and it should be yours with a new guitar). It needs a fair bit after what was likely a chilly shipping environment. We also double check the vintage saddle heights with our radius gauge and all is well, though we notice a significant buzz that seems to be coming from the bridge on the D string when fretted. We try changing the string after failing to find any obvious cause elsewhere; bingo! Buzz eradicated.

With the acoustic checks done, and like all good semis this certainly is enjoyable to play unplugged too, it's time to find out more about these pickups. All Duncan Designed, the neck and middle are Tele-style while the bridge is a mini humbucker. And what a combination they turn out to be. The mini 'bucker has a chimey snarl that can get you into a lot of good places; including ragged Neil Young tones and sweeter crunch when the volume is dialled back. Its brightness pairs well with the single-coils and the second and fourth positions prove their worth for cleaner, mellower waters. The neck TE-103 ticks all the right boxes; that hollow tonality with just the right dash of metallic edge for blues, and rolled back on the tone for jazzier fare.

A six-point tremolo adds to the fun here on a guitar that proves how potent the unusual single-coil and mini humbucker combination can be for blues, rock, jazz and all spaces in between.

Rob Laing

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★½
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★½
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★½
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★
PLAYABILITY	★★★½
OVERALL RATING	★★★★½

Photography Phil Barker

1 TRUSS ROD COVER
The aluminium skyscraper cover looks great but if you need to adjust the truss rod, we found its removal is unnecessarily difficult; we ended up having to loosen the three lowest strings enough to move them off the nut just to be able to carefully slide it out. It's also then difficult to access the right hand screw as it falls in line with the B string.

2 TUNERS
Not only do they fit right in with the aesthetic here, those tuners are quality Grover Super Rotomatics

3 FRETBOARD
Its ebony-dark but the wood here may at first seem an unusual choice for fretboard compared to the competition, but ovangkol is an African relative of rosewood.

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Mahogany top back and sides
NECK: Maple
SCALE: 628.65mm (24.75")
FINGERBOARD: Ovangkol, 14" radius
FRETS: 22
PICKUPS: Duncan Designed TE-103 neck and middle, Duncan Designed MH-102 bridge
CONTROLS: Volume, Tone, 5-way blade selector
HARDWARE: Grover Super Rotomatic tuners, 6-point tremolo
LEFT-HANDED: No
GIG BAG: Included
FINISH: Sky Blue (reviewed), Oxblood and Black Flake available with Tune-O-Matic bridge
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BOSS SY-200 GUITAR SYNTHESIZER £299

Compact guitar synthesis for the masses, or a gimmick?

We've long been fans of guitar synthesis, with this reviewer long dragging a now-outdated Roland guitar synth to gigs in the mid-to-late 2000s. However, we've yet to find a stompbox that can go toe-to-toe with a proper keyboard synth. Could the new generation of ultra-compact BOSS guitar synths finally deliver?

The fact it's polyphonic without a hex pickup makes us feel old, for a start. Neverthless, it takes less than a minute before we've got oriented with the patches, and pulled up a searing synth lead sound. Some distortion and delay added to the signal chain helps add to the larger-than-life feel. Elsewhere, the pads respond well to a variety of picked, plucked and arpeggiated Opeth-style open chords. Although the tones are 'analog inspired', many of the pad variations have us in mind of the JV digital rack synths – no bad thing, if you're into retro 90s tones. The bassier, brass synths are a highlight. They even seem to tolerate some drop-D antics, although we find ourselves adding a bit more gain and bringing more of the dry guitar back in.

An expression pedal opens up greater expressive capabilities, like pitch shifts and filter sweeps. For most pad and bass patches, setting the expression to tone allows for dynamic pedal-controlled filtering.

> "LEAD SOUNDS GOOD ENOUGH TO DITCH THE KEYBOARD"

For leads, setting it to pitch results in bombastic, whammy-esque craziness. It's a gamechanger to the extent that the SY-200 without expression pedal feels incomplete.

The tracking on the whole is good, even with the lack of a dedicated pickup. The only issue is that the dynamics of a guitar are a little different to a keyboard. Notes swell in, partly to aid the tracking, but it means that sometimes the dynamics of the guitar are lost. Some hits feel lacking in weight, particularly when fully wet, or playing chords with a pick.

The real question is whether you compare this only to other guitar synthesizers, or to synthesizers more generally. In terms of serious guitar synthesis, Roland/BOSS are pretty much the only game in town. This means that the SY-200 is unique at its price point and with its feature set.

It's inspiring enough that a few fun riffs tumbled out, and for a session musician the lead sounds are good enough to ditch the keyboard for. However, the patches are limited in the number of parameters you'd be able to control compared to a real synthesizer. We'd say the SY-200 is a solid hit, but not quite a knockout punch.

Alex Lynham

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★½
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★½
OVERALL RATING	★★★★

1 EXPRESSION IN
The pedal comes to life when used with an expression pedal

2 1, 2, 3 KNOBS
Context-specific knobs control additional parameters on each patch

3 MIDI IN/OUT
The pedal can be controlled via MIDI for integration into more complex rigs

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Guitar synthesizer

FEATURES: 12 modes, 128 patches, MIDI control

CONTROLS: Memory, 1, 2, 3, Direct Level, Effect Level, Variation, Patch, Menu, Exit

CONNECTIONS: Input, Send, Return, Output, Ctrl/Exp, Midi Out/In, USB

POWER: 9V DC or 3x AA

Photography Phil Barker

ELECTRO-HARMONIX RIPPED SPEAKER

£89

Total Guitar BEST BUY AWARD

A stompbox that celebrates lo-fi distortion

Guitar history is full of instances where recordings have been made all the more distinctive by either the use of a piece of broken equipment or perfectly serviceable gear being pushed to extremes. The first recorded fuzz sound apparently came about via a faulty studio preamplifier, while overloaded desk channels were the key to the incendiary guitar sound on the Beatles' *Revolution*. EHX's Ripped Speaker pays homage to those sort of lo-fi distortion tones which of course can also come from a damaged speaker cone, perhaps the most celebrated being the sound of The Kinks' *You Really Got Me*, which came about after Dave Davies sliced his speaker with a razor blade.

Basically a fuzz pedal, the Ripped Speaker has the expected Fuzz and Volume knobs but also has adjustable bias via the 'Rip' knob to alter the waveform clipping. Conventional fuzz sound resides in a small arc around its central position. Here you'll get tasty mid-60s full-bodied fuzz with a rough-edged rasp, aided by a potent Tone knob that can really shape the sound, pushing the top end presence at the expense of lower-mid girth when turned clockwise. Turning the Rip knob to the right increases a hard gating effect that can be exploited with dynamics, muting and guitar volume. It works well for tightly played chords and doublestops and you can get a sitar-like buzz for single note playing. The sound gets more lo-fi, broken and sputtery as you turn the knob clockwise up to where it sounds like your rig is on its last legs. To the knob's left the gating is less harsh offering a different array of musical options.

Its gnarly fuzz combined with access to some spectacularly broken tones makes this a great buy as a lo-fi toolbox for your pedalboard. Get ripped.

Trevor Curwen

> "GNARLY FUZZ COMBINED WITH SPECTACULAR TONES"

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★½
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★½
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★½
OVERALL RATING	★★★★½

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Fuzz pedal

FEATURES: True bypass

CONTROLS: Volume, Rip, Tone, Fuzz, Bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output

POWER: 9V battery (included) or 9V DC adaptor (not supplied) 10mA

DIMENSIONS: 70 (w) x 111 (d) x 50 mm (h)

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Words Jenna Scaramanga **Photo** Alex Waespi

LÉA SEN

Léa Sen is a polymath: the 22 year old writes, plays, produces and mixes everything on her own records. But she's clear where her inspiration starts: "Guitar is my number one thing," she says. "It's the thing I pick up before anything else. It influences everything I do. I actually struggle writing melodies on top of a song, but when I have a guitar in my hands, the way they work together just comes very naturally. That's really my challenge: 'how can I take those electric sounds in my head, more experimental ambient stuff, with guitar fingerpicking and make it all work together?' That gets me going every day."

Born in France but living in London, Sen's music has a broad-minded quality that draws from many styles. Latest single *Hyasynth* teases her forthcoming EP. Although it uses a simple two-chord groove, the chords themselves are expansive, jazz-influenced voicings. Léa often challenges herself to find new chord shapes. "Sometimes I'm like, 'Why am I trying to be unique? Let me just play pop songs!' I grew up listening to jazz where harmony could get really interesting and complex. I connected with it, like 'oh my god I just I don't hear that on the radio!' I'm really trying to have songs that people can listen to, because I used to make songs that were so weird. I would have musicians be really excited about them and then my mom wouldn't care about them! So I'm trying to have songs that my mom can listen to but also I do really think about harmony and melodies and how they connect together."

Léa's guitar collection is simple: a 70s Telecaster which she records direct to the computer, a Taylor electro-acoustic which she records with a Shure SM7 mic, and a nylon-strung guitar she bought from a friend for £10.

"I used to never play nylons because I just didn't have one back in France," she explains. "But I've just been falling in love with it. It just feels like it fits. I have a song on the EP called *I Feel Like I'm Blue* where I put lots of effects on it. People always think it's an electric guitar. I really like trying to use the acoustic sounds and make them sound crazy."

Her productions are fearlessly experimental. "I'm definitely not much of a nerd!" she laughs. "I don't know what I'm using most of the time. I just get plug-ins and play around with them, then I just forget them."

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